THE STRIKE IN THE B— MILL.

ROUND-ROBIN SERIES

The Strike in the B— Mill

A Study

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PREFACE.

If what is here written could, in some degree, emphasize, in the minds of those who may take the trouble to read it, the evils and dangers attendant upon certain manifestations of the present day in this country, and their causes, its purpose will be well served.

THE AUTHOR.

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THE STRIKE IN THE B—— MILL.

CHAPTER I.

THE STRIKE.

"WELL, we've done it. Now let's see what the Corporation will make of it."

This was said by a tall, handsome man, who, in shirt-sleeves and with his coat hanging on his arm, entered a pleasant sitting-room in one of the better class of tenement houses in F——.

His pretty wife, whom he addressed, sat by the open window, sewing, — for it was a warm day in October, — and two little children played together on the carpet at her feet.

"So you've really struck, John?" she said, looking up quickly from her work, with an anxious expression clouding her comely face.

"Yes. The order came just before noon, and we all marched out: All of us 'Associates,' that is. There are two or three hundred others, you know; but they'll have to stop work, I guess, as there'll be nothing for them to do, now we're gone."

"Well," returned his wife, "I suppose some of you had reason enough, if they don't get fair wages."

"Yes; they ought to give what we ask, that's a fact. It isn't much of an advance, and that only in some departments."

Vance, for that was the man's name — John Vance — went into a back room and washed his hands, and came back putting on his coat. He seated himself in a chair, and, reaching down, lifted the youngest of

the two children, — a beautiful little boy of two years, with dark hair and eyes, — to his knee. The other boy, somewhat older, ran across the room, and, sure of his welcome, climbed upon the other knee. Their father, who was evidently very fond of them, played with them a moment or two, but with rather a preoccupied air; then, again addressing his wife, he said: —

"Bradford and the others say that we shall get the advance we ask for."

"Who is Bradford — and the others, who are they, John?"

"Why, he and Murphy are our Executive Committee; and you've heard me speak often enough of Darragh, the last few days."

"Oh, yes. You say he's a fine man."

"He *is* that," said Vance. "As nice a man as I ever saw. Careful and safe."

"And how are we to live, John, until the

Company makes up its mind? I don't want to draw our little money from the bank, you know. And there is'nt but a little of it, any way."

"Oh, there will be contributions from all around. They say there's plenty that'll come in if we need it. But the mill isn't going to stand out long," he added, confidently.

The woman bit off the end of a thread thoughtfully.

"I am not quite so sure about that," she said, slowly. "They may think you won't be able to stand out long yourselves, and may wait awhile to see." She thought a moment. "I don't like the looks of things," she went on. "There are too many strikes. Here you, who are getting wages that satisfy you, obliged to stop because somebody else in the mill is not getting enough. That don't seem right to me, exactly. But per-

haps you know best," she added. Then looking at her husband and seeming to recall something, she said, suddenly. "But why weren't you home to dinner, John?" She arose as she spoke and went to the stove. "I've kept something for you in the oven, but it's three o'clock most, and I'm afraid it can't be good for much now."

"Oh," rejoined her husband, "never mind that. I got something to eat at O'Flaherty's with the rest of the men. We wanted to talk things over."

His wife looked at him more closely, though rather furtively, and, observing his flushed face, she averted her eyes instantly, and, again sitting down, bent over her work. Presently she said, with a little hesitation, "There's more to drink than to eat sold at O'Flaherty's. I wish you wouldn't go there, dear. Now you're without work, don't get into bad ways, John."

"Well, I don't mean to, Mary," said he, good-humoredly.

His wife smiled, then sighed a little. Vance chatted and played awhile with the children; then, setting them down, he stretched himself, and looked out of the window. The unusual idleness in the middle of the day was irksome to him. After standing about for a little time he thoughtfully filled his pipe, lighted it, and slowly sauntered out. Mary Vance sewed on awhile after he had gone, then dropped her work on her lap and sat with still fingers and bent brow, lost in thought. She was aroused in a few moments by the salutation of a young woman in the loose draggled gown and faded shawl so commonly seen in factory towns, who stopped in the hall and looked in at the open door. As she leaned against the door-frame in a weary attitude, she looked enviously over the pleasant room.

"Good-afternoon, Fanny," said Mrs. Vance, glancing up at her pleasantly.

"Good-afternoon," she replied, in a rather discontented tone. "We're through at the B——, I suppose you know."

"Yes," said Mrs. Vance. "My husband has been telling me about it. It's been talked of for some time."

"It'll be a good while before we go in that mill again, I'm thinking," said the other, despondently.

"Didn't you want to strike?" asked Mrs. Vance.

"Ah, no," answered the girl, for she was but a girl in years. "Perhaps I'd not enough of wages; they said I was of those underpaid. But I could get along, me and the baby. And now, God knows what we'll do if the strike lasts. The money I've earned this two weeks is all I've got in the world, and where'll I get any more?

I can't go away because of the baby; and I couldn't, maybe, find work. They say we're to have money from the order, but where it's coming from, with strikes all about, I don't see." Her face flushed, as she grew excited by her foreboding thoughts, and, when she concluded, the tears stood in her eyes.

"Well," said Mrs. Vance, "John's been contributing every week or fortnight for some time back, to help somebody else in other places, and it will be rather hard if the B—— folks can't get help now themselves."

"I don't care," burst out the young girl, passionately; "I wish the 'Associates of Toil' would let me alone! First, they make me join them, and then they throw me out of my work when I want to keep on. The bosses is mean enough, perhaps, but, if I was satisfied to work, it's *my* business. If

me and the baby goes hungry, who's to blame?" She wiped her eyes with the corner of her shawl. "Well," she added, resignedly, "I must go along. I'm hoping they'll patch up and let us back to work soon. Good-bye," and she slowly ascended the stairs.

A quarter of a mile down the village street, in the office of the B—— Mill, that afternoon, the paymaster and his clerks were hard at work upon the pay-rolls; while in an interior room the superintendent of the factory was closeted with the president and treasurer of the corporation. The latter gentlemen had been informed by telegraph of the strike, and had come down from the neighboring city by rail.

They seemed considerably harassed, but the superintendent had the air of a man who, in the presence of a disaster, finds

in it only the realization of his expectations.

The situation of affairs was naturally the topic of their conversation. "This matter of wages," said the superintendent, "I have, as you are aware, considered for some time, and my opinion regarding them remains unchanged. I feel that, though times are hard, some, if not all, these demands should be granted." He pointed as he spoke to a paper lying upon the table, that contained the demands of the strikers, with the wages as requested, arranged in tabulated form.

"I do not altogether disagree with you," said the president, "were it certain that concessions would not be followed by other and more unreasonable demands. As I am not too familiar with these matters, pray regard this as a mere suggestion, you know."

"In my judgment," replied the superin-

tendent, "that does not at all affect the matter we have to consider."

The superintendent was a quiet, determined-looking man, though with a habitually kind expression of face. His speech was slow and measured.

"I, as you know, gentlemen," he went on, "came up from the ranks — have been a factory hand myself, and in my present position am brought much nearer to the operatives than you. I know their needs, and the amount and value of their work, better than you possibly can. If they are earning more than they are receiving, as this sort of work is being paid for to-day, it should be an abstract question of justice with us to right this — "

"Very much so — certainly," said the president, who had listened attentively. "I should say that would be right — very."

"Yes — and when," continued the super-

intendent; "we have made such concessions as we believe to be right, and the hands are still unsatisfied, we can take our stand with clear consciences, and the blame of the strike will lie with them, not us."

The president made no further reply, but arose from his chair and walked thoughtfully up and down the room with his hands in his pockets. Notwithstanding his interest in the superintendent's views, he seemed tired and somewhat disgusted with the whole business.

The treasurer, who was evidently the most important person present, and occupied the largest arm-chair, had been hitherto leaning back in that comfortable article of furniture, placidly smoking as he listened to the superintendent. He now took his cigar from his lips and said to him, "You regard this strike, then, as justifiable, Mr. Malcolm?"

The superintendent turned his head and looked at the other in silence for a moment. Then, with his slowness of speech intensified, he said, firmly, "Mr. Hartwell, during the past three months, I have constantly spoken to you of the discontent existing in the mill, and have formally reported it to the directors; and equally, I have urged some increase of wages in certain departments, where our hands are paid less than in other corporations for similar work. I will not go into particulars, but you know exactly the men who are so underpaid. The difference is not great, but it is there, and these are not times when it is possible to maintain such differences, apart from the question of right. My views on this subject have been familiar to you, and I do not like your assuming that I look on the strike with favor because of them." The superintendent stopped a moment, then added: "I

detest strikes, and consider the 'Associates of Toil' as a most mischievous organization in the main; more hurtful to the laborer, indeed, than to us. But if I do not like the methods employed to obtain what they want, that does not alter my opinion of the justice of some of the demands our operatives are now making."

He stopped, opened his lips as if to speak farther, then appeared to think he had said enough; giving a twist to his revolving-office chair, he reached a paper knife from the table and, slowly turning it in his fingers, remained silent.

The treasurer was a dignified gentleman, of courteous demeanor, but his eye sparkled and the puffs of smoke from his cigar were rather more rapid than usual as he listened to his subordinate.

Controlling such annoyance as he may have felt, however, he replied in his ordi-

nary bland tone, "You must not forget, my dear sir, that we are servants of the Corporation, and cannot treat these matters as personal to ourselves," —

"You are a rather heavy stockholder," interrupted the superintendent, "and I own considerable myself."

"Certainly, certainly," said the treasurer, "but our position is one of trust for others as well as ourselves. Personally," he continued, with his mildest manner, "personally, nothing would afford me greater pleasure than to pay generous wages, but duty prevents the gratification of such a feeling. Philanthropy is not business, Mr. Malcolm. We must buy our labor upon substantially the same basis that we do our cotton. But apart from this, I feel very strongly that we should have nothing whatever to do with this organization who have sent in this impudent demand. The directors will meet

to-morrow here. I shall agree to no concession — at least until the men are willing to deal with you individually."

"I doubt very much," said the superintendent, "whether they will do that at present."

"They must!" said the treasurer, rather angrily. "And when they do it will be time enough to consider any possible change of wages, which matter, it seems to me, we are prematurely discussing."

"I cannot see," retorted the superintendent, "how the vital trouble here can be considered too early or often between us. It has to be faced, and the sooner, the better."

"Well, well, perhaps so," impatiently responded the other, "and very likely it may not be settled quite as you anticipate. I, at least, have never agreed with you there." Then turning and touching a bell

upon the table, he spoke to the paymaster, who looked in.

"I will have the funds down to-morrow, Beach," he said, "and you can pay off then, if your rolls are ready."

"That will be impossible, Mr. Hartwell," answered the paymaster. "Being wholly unprepared, we cannot have them done until Friday morning, working almost night and day."

"Then give notice for Friday, and let us have that matter out of the way as soon as possible."

"Any hard words or demonstrations among the men, Mr. Malcolm?" he asked, again addressing the superintendent.

"None at all, sir. Many appeared very unwilling to quit work, and in the dye-rooms and machine-shop the men would not have stirred, I believe, were it not for the discipline of the organization. They and many others are content with their wages."

"They all ought to be," said the treasurer, as he lighted a fresh cigar.

"Some of those," continued the superintendent, with a little extra emphasis, "whom I regard as underpaid, have been so long discontented that I expected some loud talk. But they treated us to none whatever."

"Very well," said the treasurer; "but neglect no proper police precautions. You cannot tell," he added, with a little smile, "exactly where a striker may strike."

"All that will be attended to," answered the superintendent. "Some of the police will, I've no doubt, be detailed for duty here if required. And I shall have a number of special constables sworn in for steady service as watchmen. There are a large number of our men not 'Associates of Toil,' who will be employed for some time here clearing up, if this thing lasts, and we have a

large line of those prints to ship to New York as you ordered. There is a good deal of work to be done."

Mr. Phillips, the president, though listening attentively to the conversation, had shown no disposition to take part in it beyond his first brief suggestion, and had continued pacing the room, or had sat with one leg on the table as the discussion went forward.

"If you are ready, Hartwell," he now remarked, picking up his hat, "perhaps we had better start for our train. It goes at 4:30."

"So it does; well, good-afternoon, Mr. Malcolm; we shall see you to-morrow."

"Our friend seems rather to side with the strikers," said the president, as they walked down the street.

"Not quite that," said Mr. Hartwell; "but he is always soft-hearted toward the

laboring man, and gives me considerable trouble with his fads and notions of what they ought to have done for them in the mill. He doesn't get very far with me there. However, he is an exceedingly valuable man, and we could not get on without him."

They talked of other things until, as they were parting on the platform of their home station, the president said, suddenly: —

"I'm not sure that old Malcolm isn't half right about the laboring men, after all. Perhaps we don't give them quite as fair a chance as they deserve."

The treasurer looked a little annoyed, but forced a laugh, and they parted.

The superintendent, upon their departure, put on his hat and went into the factory, and was in consultation with one of his non-union foremen on the second floor, when the door

opening from the stair landing slammed, and a man entered and walked toward them down one of the long aisles between the looms.

He was good-looking and sunburned, dressed in a gray suit and slouch hat; and he carried a buggy whip in his hand.

He greeted Mr. Malcolm with a hearty voice, and nodded pleasantly to the foreman.

"They seem to have done it at last, Mr. Malcolm," he said.

"Yes," replied Malcolm, "they've gone out, I'm sorry to say. My regret lies in the fact that the thing might and ought to have been averted. I told you the other day, down at the farm, that I feared that it was inevitable."

"Yes," said the other, "and I agreed with you. I have driven over," he continued, "to ask if things are likely to be quiet and orderly for the present, and whether your

knowledge of the temper of the men would lead you to suggest any immediate police precautions."

"I do not think, Mr. Brayton," said the superintendent, "that the strike will be of long duration; for, as I look at it, we are bound to make some concessions, and if they are met in the right spirit, and no outside complications are introduced, it ought to be settled in a day or two."

"I was just told of a man," said Brayton, "whom they called Darragh, a member of the General Executive Board of the 'Associates of Toil,' who appears to have happened around here about this time on some matter, and rather instigated this movement. But they say he is a very good fellow, notwithstanding, and likely to counsel moderation. Do you know him?"

"Yes, by reputation, which agrees with what you have been told. He, I under-

stand, drew up the schedule of wages that they demand, and I am bound to say that it is very reasonable."

"What police force have you in the town, by the way?" he added.

"I am ashamed to say," replied Brayton, "that I do not exactly know. But there cannot be over five or six regular officers."

"That is not much of a force," said Malcolm.

"No," said Brayton; "but, notwithstanding your people, we have always had a quiet community."

The superintendent was stooping to pick out some shreds from a loom.

"That is too few, I should say, at any time, however," he said, rising.

"Well," answered Brayton, smiling, "you know our New England idea has always been to obey the laws and keep the peace

ourselves, without the intervention of many policemen."

"Yes," said Malcolm; "but these people who have been coming into the country by the million are many of them new to the American ideas, and some of them are very slow to learn them. You have to think of that."

"Well," said Brayton, "in a case like the present, we certainly ought to bear it in mind. Our board meets to-night, and we shall qualify a number of specials. Give me the benefit of your advice as to how many ought to be needed."

"Better have enough," said Malcolm. "My judgment would be that while few may be required if things go as I hope, still they make take another turn, and you may need a good many. It is better to have them quietly sworn in now and available when needed, than to take such measures

later, when it would attract more attention, and perhaps intensify existing bad feeling."

"Yes," said Brayton, thoughtfully, "that is certainly the wiser plan."

"All our night watchmen," Mr. Malcolm went on, "are now constables; but, if you have no objection, I should like to send in a few others to-night to be qualified as such, as we must now have watchmen day as well as night."

"All right; send them along," said Brayton.

They walked together down the long room between the hundreds of idle looms, across which the level rays of the afternoon sun were shining, unburdened by the particles of dust that filled the air when they were in active operation.

The superintendent stopped, laying his hand on one of the looms.

"Man and boy, Mr. Brayton, I have got

my living out of these things, both in England and here."

"They've been much improved," said Brayton, "since you began, I take it."

"Yes — they, and the application of the power that drives them, have been altered from time to time; but the principle remains the same. You will hardly believe it, perhaps, but the old hand-loom can still make the best cloth. That is what I was taught to work on as a boy. I left there when very young," continued Mr. Malcolm, "but I am told that they are still much in use in my old district and in other parts of England and Scotland."

"Indeed!" said Brayton; "I was not aware of that."

"Yes," said the other, "and for fine woollen cloths they are still the best. But it's a slow process compared to that where other power is used, of course; and where,

as in this mill, we manufacture cotton, woollen, and mixed cloths, all under the same roof, by the thousands of yards, the old hand-loom seems a small affair, in spite of its excellent work. You see, Mr. Brayton," he continued, after a pause, "I began at the bottom, and I have lots of sympathy with those who are there yet. Some of the men think I'm rather hard because I try to do my duty and expect them to do theirs. But they haven't a better friend than I, and many of them, I think, know it."

"It is a great pity," said Brayton, "that these people have left their work. They can't afford to do it, most of them, for a day. I hope you can give them what they want, and have them soon back."

"I hope so, most sincerely," said the superintendent, earnestly, "for their own sakes far more than ours; though, of course, it's a loss all around, I'll admit. A rest

from production last year might not have hurt us. But we are just now in such a position with regard to certain lines of goods that a long delay will certainly injure us."

"Yes," replied Brayton; "but I couldn't probably understand it very well if explained. I am only a farmer, now, you know. Possibly I might be more intelligent if we were speaking of the operation of a smelting furnace, or the simple conditions governing the production of gold and silver. Well, I must get home," he added, "as I have to drive in again this evening."

They had been moving down the stairs, and Brayton stepped from the door and, unhitching his horse, got into his light trotting wagon and drove out of the court-yard.

The mare he drove would have attracted the attention of more critical eyes than those that admiringly followed her in the streets of F——, by her extreme beauty;

and the swift, stealing gait with which she whirled her master's vehicle toward home was rhythmical in its smoothness and cadence.

As Brayton drove the handsome creature with a light hand down the long village street, he looked curiously at the groups of idle men hanging about the corners or slowly sauntering along the sidewalks. In a large city there is so constant a flow of humanity through the streets at all times that any change in the conditions of a large number of people creates hardly any change. But in a small village like F——, the suddenly acquired leisure of over two thousand men and women altered the whole appearance of the place. They seemed to overflow everywhere.

Brayton noticed that the men, for the most part, seemed in high good-humor, and to be having rather a good time of it.

Their faces wore a look of triumph born of their recent act of self-assertion, as they regarded it; and it seemed to him as though it were idle to fear any evil from these good-natured men, who appeared at peace with themselves and the world.

But he presently drove by the door of a drinking saloon, and saw it vomit forth a crowd of men with flushed faces and thick loud speech. Then he saw the shadow of future trouble, and the possible necessity for the precautions he had contemplated.

The son of a small storekeeper in F——, George Brayton had early in life gone to California, where, as fortunate and more prudent, perhaps, than many others, he had by hard work quickly acquired a small competency, with which he returned to settle near his old home.

He purchased a large farm a couple of miles out of the village, and had expended

much money in the raising of very particular stock, and in other costly agricultural experiments of various kinds.

As an old townsboy and a very good fellow to boot, he was well received, and rather popular; and, much against his inclination, had been chosen this year a member of the board of selectmen, and was now its chairman. He had said, when objecting to this troublesome honor, that if the village were as he left it, a little Yankee farming community, he should not have minded serving them, but, with this great mill that he had found on his return from the West, and between two and three thousand additional, partly floating, and largely foreign, population, it was not so pleasant a town to govern.

He reached home in a sharp drive of a few minutes, and, leaving the team in the stable-yard, went into the house.

"Well, mother," he said to the pleasant-looking old lady whom he found seated at the tea-table, "I see I'm a little late, and, if you please, I'll sit right down, as I must go back to town this evening."

"What takes you there so soon again, George?" she said, looking up at him through her glasses. "Is it to see Ellen?"

"No, though I shall try to get into Mr. Hardy's if I have time. There is a special meeting of the selectmen to-night, and I must be there. This strike makes it necessary to take some unusual measures."

"You don't fear any trouble, do you, George?"

"Oh, no — I think not. But an ounce of prevention, you know, mother, is often advisable."

They talked of different matters, and presently the old lady remarked that she

supposed George knew how sick the merino buck was.

"Sick? No, I didn't," he answered, quickly, looking up from his plate. "I should think," he went on, "Johnson had better speak to me about a thing like that."

"Hannah told me," said Mrs. Brayton, "that he was taken this afternoon. Johnson, no doubt, meant to tell you this evening."

"I declare," exclaimed Brayton, pushing away his cup, and looking moodily before him, "Isn't it too bad? I've lost one already. Why couldn't this fellow die before I paid a hundred dollars for him? Well," he continued, "I can't help it. Johnson knows how to doctor him."

"On the whole," he said, after thinking a minute or two, "I believe I'll sell my sheep and get rid of Johnson."

"What! your beautiful merinos, that you are so fond of?"

"Yes, why not? they have been a constant outgo; and I've been thinking it time to pull myself together a little. This labor movement seems to be spreading in every direction, and, though it don't touch me yet, things may get into such a condition, throughout the country, as shall impoverish us all before we are through with it. I'll sell the sheep," he went on, "and clear out a lot of my high-priced colts and heifers, and get down to more legitimate farming. Don't be troubled, mother," he continued, laughing, as that lady looked a little anxious. He turned his chair so that he could look out of the window and under the trees across his broad fields, stretching toward the sunset sky.

"There is no need of worrying," he continued, "for I have a farm here that will take care of us, and some others besides, I hope, whatever comes. Ah, there is some

one," he added, as a large shadow fell across the hall, and a knock sounded on the lintel of the open outside door; for the evening was as warm as the day had been.

He stepped into the hall, and Mrs. Brayton heard a loud voice say: "Haow air ye, George? I wuz up this way, and wanted ter look at one uv them grade Durhams uv yourn. Though it's kinder late, tew be sure. No, I wun't come in, thank ye."

Brayton lighted a cigar, and went with his visitor across the well kept lawn and up the driveway to the barn, where that experienced person proceeded to examine some pretty cattle that stood in the yard, as well as the fast-falling dusk would permit.

"Nice-lookin' critters," he observed, taking a chew of tobacco. "But," he added, tentatively, as he rolled the tobacco comfortably into his cheek, "ye can't see 'em jest so well in this light."

"You know what they are, Mr. Bradshaw," said Brayton, "and hardly need to look at them. I am willing to sell, for I mean to reduce my herd more than usual this fall."

"Yaas?" said Mr. Bradshaw, regarding Brayton with a ludicrously earnest gaze. "But they dew say ye hold 'em pritty middlin' high, naow, George."

Mr. Bradshaw was rather fond of Brayton, and treated him with a paternal familiarity, to which he had not the least objection.

"Oh, well," said Brayton, with a laugh, "I have such a high regard for you that I'll try and not overreach you. Come, make me an offer for a pair of them; and take your pick. They are all so good that I'm quite indifferent as to which you select."

Mr. Bradshaw was a tall, raw-boned farmer, with a good-natured twinkle in his

eye, that revealed the dry humor that was one of his prevailing characteristics. But a cow trade, however agreeable, was no laughing matter, and, as he now worked himself through the bars and walked about among the animals, carefully scrutinizing their points, his face was very grave.

"George," he said, solemnly, after a lengthy inspection, "I *wish* it war'n't gittin' so dark. I like them two large red critters: but 'tain't no use decidin'," he added, with a despondent shake of his head; "I couldn't like ter say what they wuz wuth, in all this dark."

He came out through the bars and stood contemplating Brayton with a look of dreamy calculation that indicated that he was mentally struggling with the preparation of an offer in spite of the darkness.

"Naow," he finally said, concluding to shift this great responsibility to Brayton's

shoulders; "naow, what would *yer* idee be fur them two?"

"They are worth more," said Brayton, "but I don't want to winter them, and you can take them for one hundred and seventy-five dollars."

"That'll dew! that'll dew, George," exclaimed Mr. Bradshaw, with a simulated excitement that would have deceived the unwary. "'Tain't no use't uv us to talk. I can't give no sech money. Waal, I must be a-goin' — good-night, good-night," he added, as he went over to where his horse and wagon were standing. He untied the animal, climbed into the wagon, and started off with a jerk; then checked the horse, and reflected with his elbows on his knees.

"George," he called softly through the darkness.

"Hallo," answered Brayton, coming toward the wagon.

"George — haow would a hundred and my crumpled-horn Dutch cow suit ye? she's a mighty likely cow, I tell ye, naow. They ain't wuth it: but I think a sight uv *ye*, tew, George," he added, with a twinkle of the eye that the darkness could not quite conceal.

"No, Mr. Bradshaw," said Brayton, flicking the ashes from his cigar; "I ought to have two hundred for them. Think my offer over."

"Waal," said the other, "I will; but 'tain't no use. Not a mite." He considered a moment. "Half Durham ye said, George?"

"Yes, more than that," said Brayton.

"Um-m-m," pondered Mr. Bradshaw; "waal, *good*-night. Mother'll think I'm lost, I'm fear'd. And mother knows how t' speak uv anythin' thet's bin layin' on her mind fur an hour or two," he added, with a

gasping chuckle, as he drove off, highly pleased with this auspicious opening of a trade that was likely to last for a month or two, at least. Indeed, a similar transaction had been known to serve Mr. Bradshaw as a pleasant recreation for his idle hours during an entire winter, and until the growing pressure of spring work hastened its consummation, or decided the parties to finally declare off.

CHAPTER II.

ATTEMPTS AT ADJUSTMENT.

THE great factory stood silent and deserted. The smoke of its fires no longer ascended from the throats of the tall chimneys. The whir and rattle of its machinery were still, and the tread of hundreds of feet and sound of talk and laughter, heard morning, noon, and night for so many years, were replaced by the foot-fall of the solitary watchman on the flags of the court or ascending the deserted stairways.

On the farther side, the waters of the wide river, no longer partially diverted into the flume, poured over the dam with ceaseless roar, and dashed swiftly by the stone foundations of the huge group of buildings that

overhung the stream. Always hitherto associated with the activities of men and the noise of their occupancy, the great silent pile now stood there seemingly the vast mausoleum of a dead industry.

The directors, seated in the office of the mill on the day after the strike, did not wear very pleasant faces as they discussed a situation that needed little explanation.

Upon the entrance of the superintendent, a few minutes after the opening of the meeting, he, at the suggestion of the president, addressed the board.

"I do not care, gentlemen," he said, in his usual deliberate tones, "to speak at any length to you on the causes that have led to this strike. My views were very fully expressed with regard to these wages, when you asked for them at your last meeting, and they are unchanged. You know that I think that some advances should be made.

Perhaps some of you will have now come around to my way of thinking. The adjustment of wages, usually left with me, has been, as you are aware, in this case, taken out of my hands by the treasurer, as involving a very large expenditure, and his opinions have hitherto been sustained by your board. I now ask to have this matter left with me to adjust, if possible; but under your instructions. As to whether I am to deal with the organization that has ordered these people out, it is for you to say, if you conclude that something may be done in the way of increasing the wages complained of. I am decidedly of opinion that you should give me the right, at least to talk with their officials and hear what they have to say. I can then report to you, and it will be for you to determine finally whether to ratify any arrangement I can come at with them. In our present position, and dealing with a

difficulty that might threaten the very life of the corporation, the final responsibility should lie with the whole board. No one official would be willing to assume it."

The superintendent stopped and reached his hand to the back of a chair, as if about to sit down. He hesitated, rubbed his chin thoughtfully, and added: "My earnest advice, as an officer and stockholder here, is, that, as we are in the wrong to a greater or less extent, we should not be too nice as to the method of adjusting this wage difference, so that it be done equitably and quickly."

He looked the directors squarely in the face, and sat down as he concluded.

A little pause followed. The directors looked at each other, and each waited for another to say something.

Presently a youngish, rather good-looking man, with a bronzed face and direct, off-hand manner, said that he wasn't ashamed

to admit that he quite agreed with Mr. Malcolm, that something ought to have been done long ago about the wages in question: and he now moved the board that the superintendent be fully authorized to settle this matter — with the operatives or anybody, he didn't much care who — in the best manner that suggested itself to him. He might report to the board if he pleased, but he thought the board had better back a man who seemed to have known more than any one of them. "For my part," he added, "I don't care a straw about the means in this matter, so that they are fair and above board. Let us have justice done to the hands and the mill started up, for their and our own sakes, as soon as possible."

Mr. Hartwell, the treasurer, who was, of course, a member of the board, now thought it time for him to interpose, and, rising, regretted to disagree with his young friend,

Mr. Alston; "as to the superintendent," he said, with a gentle smile toward that gentleman, "he and I are too much accustomed to that sort of thing to mind it much."

Mr. Hartwell then went on to express himself as totally opposed to any dealings with this offensive organization, that was spreading over the land and dictating to capital and labor alike.

He attributed to its pernicious influence all the trouble that they and others were having with their labor; and he considered that the future existence of the industrial enterprises of the country, in which so much capital was invested, depended on the crushing out of the "Associates of Toil," — upon strictly refusing to recognize them in the slightest particular. In the matter of wages, he must say that he failed to see that they (the corporation) were specially to blame. In fact, he thought it clearly their

duty to get their labor as cheaply as was possible. That was business, and this was no place for sentimental considerations. He was not sure that the wiser course was not to close the mill awhile until the people were ready to come back at the old rates, or get others who would be glad to receive them. But, at all events, and whether they were right or wrong about the wages, he hoped no negotiations would be permitted with officials of the "Associates of Toil"; in conclusion, he trusted that the well-meant but rather ill-considered views previously expressed would not prevail with the board.

A portly personage, dressed in irreproachable broadcloth, but with rather dirty finger-nails, remarked, in a loud and disagreeable voice, without rising from his chair, that he should think an intelligent board of directors, who had, *some* of them, been manufacturing goods all their lives, were compe-

tent to run the B—— Mills without any help from such a concern as the "Associates of Toil." That he was in favor of making no talk or concessions to any one. He thought they could stand it as long as the hands could. If they wanted to stay out, send to Canada or somewhere, fill up the mill with new help, and go ahead.

"I suppose," said Alston, quickly, "we ought to have some regard for the abstract rights of others, Mr. Williams. I do not care to go into a fight with these poor people, when I feel that we are wrong at the start. I've looked into this matter a little, and have no doubt of the substantial justice of most of their claims. Therefore I cannot agree with you, sir."

"If you had reached my time of life, sir," retorted Mr. Williams, huffily, "and had worked for your money, instead of inheriting it, you'd know rather more than you do now, perhaps."

A pale gentleman, seated at the lower end of the table, here put up a single eye-glass with his partly gloved hand.

"Oh, — I say, now, Mr. President," he said, with a strong rising inflection; "this sort of thing won't do, don't you know. I really must rise to a point of order, sir."

The gentleman did not actually arise, notwithstanding his expressed intention, but the president observed him, and said, "Well, well, gentlemen, we don't seem to be getting on. Shall I put this motion of Mr. Alston's, or what would any one advise?"

"I don't wish," he added, mildly, "to have too much to say myself. But I have been thinking a little, lately, that perhaps these people we employ have rather a hard time of it, and it is not precisely the thing, you *may* agree, to pay them less than they earn. Pray receive this as a

mere suggestion, for I should not presume to dictate. As to the 'Associates of Toil,' I don't know really what to say — upon my word, I don't. Had we not better have a little farther expression of opinion? Now, for instance, what do *you* think about dealing with them, Mr. Watson?" he concluded, turning with a bow to the gentleman at his elbow; and, having passed the matter along, as it were, he sat down with an air of relief, and, stretching out his legs, thrust both hands in his pockets.

The discussion now assumed a more colloquial form, and continued for some time, the stronger feeling seeming to be against dealing with the "Associates of Toil." But, upon the farther representation of the superintendent that their chief official seemed a very fair man, it was decided that he might consult provisionally with him, and report to the board a few days

later, when it could finally determine as to the manner of settlement and the schedule of wages that should be paid. The directors, in view of the disagreement between its officials on the questions at issue, seemed inclined to keep the matter in their own hands, as suggested by the superintendent. After the adjournment, it might have been observed that Mr. Alston and the president went away together.

Separated during their short railway ride to the city by the crowded state of the train, they rejoined each other at their destination.

"Let me set you down at your house, Mr. Alston," said the president. "My carriage is here, I believe."

As they rolled smoothly through the streets, they passed several half-finished buildings. While the hour was late for workmen to be seen about them, yet it was

plain that none would have been there had it been earlier in the day. For that peculiar appearance of neglect that things intended for immediate use assume when left for a considerable time exposed to the elements, pervaded the masses of material — the lumber, mortar, and stone — piled in and about them. Evidently there had been no work done upon them for some time.

The president pointed to one of these premature ruins as they drove by.

"Strikes everywhere," he remarked, briefly.

"Yes," said Alston; "the thing really amounts to an epidemic."

"Um," murmured the president, reflectively, as he drummed with his fingers upon the sash of the carriage window.

"Some reasonable," he said again; "others quite the reverse, I should say."

"Many of them — yes," answered Alston;

"and it is noticeable that where the strikers are manifestly in the wrong, they seem far more earnest and bitter than when they are simply standing out to get what they ought to have."

"Better come and dine with me," said the president, rather irrelevantly; adding, after a pause, "We might talk our matters over a little, perhaps."

"Thanks, very much," said Alston, with a surprised look; for his acquaintance with his companion had been slight, and effusive hospitality, even within its own charmed circle, was by no means a characteristic of the society in which they moved; "but Mrs. A. will hardly allow of it, I fear. However, my dear sir," he added, "as you are not hampered in that way, pray stop and take 'pot-luck' with me, instead. I certainly should be glad to discuss our affairs with you.

"Come, Mr. Phillips, here we are," he added, as the carriage stopped in front of his own door.

That gentleman, after some demur, and objecting that he was not dressed for dinner, yielded, and, dismissing his carriage, accompanied Alston into the house.

A charming little girl ran to meet her father in the hall, and, swung up on his arm, looked inquiringly at the stranger over his shoulder.

"Really, a very pretty child — very pretty," said Mr. Phillips, with the embarrassment of an old bachelor in the presence of that singular creature, a child; "yours, I presume," he added.

"Well, *rather*," said Alston, with a laugh, pinching the child's cheek: "aren't you, ducky? But, pray walk in and sit down, and I will join you in a moment," he went on, opening the parlor door.

Alston ran up the staircase two steps at a time, with the child in his arms, and, bursting into his wife's boudoir, kissed that pretty little lady impetuously.

"Ada, my darling," he said, tossing the child in his strong hands, "you should really be uncommonly particular with the menu this evening, for that eminent club man and gourmand, Mr. Phillips, honors us — even now he awaits our coming, below!"

"Do take care of that child, Ned," exclaimed his wife; "there, put her down, *do*. And how can I be particular, with this late warning?"

"Ah — the hour is, indeed, too late," said Alston, with mock solemnity. "He must e'en take us as we are."

"Is this Mr. Phillips your mill president?" she asked, adding: "Come, give the baby to Ellen, and let me talk to you, for you have been away all day."

With a final toss, Alston brought the little girl's flushed, laughing face down to his own, and, with a hearty kiss, handed her to the nurse, who had followed them up stairs.

"Scant time for sweet converse now, your ladyship," he said, to his wife, as he started for his dressing-room; "the president is, without doubt, in high dudgeon already, at being left to his own entertainment so long." He returned in a few minutes and seized bodily upon his wife: "Have dinner served forthwith," he said, in mock heroic tones, "and let us downwards, in God's name — as the pious Oriental puts it."

"You and Malcolm seem to rather pull together in this business," remarked Mr. Phillips, as he and Alston sat alone, smoking, in the dining-room, after dinner.

"Well," said Alston, "he is too near right, I believe, and he ought to be supported. It is about time, Mr. Phillips, that some of us took a little thought of the people whom we employ, as well as of the goods we make and sell. As a man of leisure, I certainly can find no excuse for neglect of any such duty — at my age, at least," he added, not wishing to imply any rebuke to his companion. "I now propose," he went on, "to interest myself in this labor question, as I have been brought face to face with it. It is a shame that these operatives have suffered injustice at our hands so long."

"For my part," returned the elder gentleman, after a pause, "I am extremely annoyed that I am brought face to face with the question at all. I want to live in peace. That's why I sold my ships and gave up business; and in allowing myself to be president of this concern I did not anticipate any bothera-

tion — simply supposed I was standing for the stock of our family. However," — Mr. Phillips paused and took a puff or two at his cigar, — "as things are, —" he pulled again at his cigar — "I feel inclined to your view; and, without desiring to be put about much with it, you may as well count on my being with you in the event of controversy."

Mr. Phillips was by no means a garrulous man, and, considered by his friends to be a most excellent listener, he largely contented himself with that role. He now looked as if a little bored by his own long speech, and, returning his cigar to his lips, smoked vigorously.

"I am very glad to hear you say this," said Alston.

"I am not sure," he went on, after they had sat in silence for a few minutes, "but what our whole manufacturing system here is going by the board. We are not making

much, and the operatives don't seem to be doing very well, either, even where they are receiving fair wages. It seems as if there were something wrong somewhere. I really must think it over. I never have before."

Mr. Phillips knocked the ashes from his cigar, turned the burning end toward his face, and contemplated it with profound interest.

"I think we'll hold on to the B—— stock yet awhile," he said, slowly; "wouldn't be fair to get out. Must stand by the ship, I should say — see the thing through."

"Oh, by all means," said Alston; "and I dare say our particular trouble will be soon over, now that you are disposed, with me, not to stand on punctilio with the strikers. It is the general condition of the manufacturing interest and the future of the laboring-man that I'm thinking of."

"Ah, yes, — certainly," said Mr. Phillips. "Interesting matter to look into — very."

He laid his cigar end in the ash-tray. "Would you mind," he said, "my saying good-night, to Mrs. Alston, as I am due for a game of whist at the club, and fear I shall be late?"

As Mr. Phillips exchanged a few words with his hostess in the drawing-room, he, while expressing his delight at making her acquaintance, added confidentially, "I have taken rather a fancy for your husband, my dear madam. Seems a pretty good sort of fellow, on the whole."

Mrs. Alston laughed. "I am sure," she said, "that if we agree as well on all questions as we do on this, I shall always be delighted to meet you, Mr. Phillips."

"Do you hunt Thursday, Ned?" she said to her husband, as they walked slowly

together up and down the room, after their visitor had gone.

"No, dear. I must be again at F——, when I hope we shall be able to finish up the strike."

"You seem," she said, "very much interested in this strike. I never knew you to care anything about the affairs of that corporation before. Was. it about them that you and Mr. Phillips have been talking so long in the dining-room?"

"Yes," he said. "The truth is, Ada, I intend to interest myself far more in these matters in the future."

"Where is the need?" she asked. "Things have gone along very well without you hitherto, haven't they?"

"Well, I should say *not*, in some respects. I have been abroad almost continuously since elected a director. Some things might have been different, perhaps, if I had

been here and understood and attended to my business."

"I thought," said Mrs. Alston, innocently, "that directors of corporations never did either."

Alston smiled dubiously. "I fear," he said, "that you are not altogether wrong there. But they ought to—in justice to the stockholders and to those with whom the corporation deals. *I'm* going to turn over a new leaf."

"Ah," said his wife, laughing, "when you say that, it means something. I can recall several leaves that you have turned during our acquaintance, and they have never been folded back," she added, looking fondly up at him. "Well, as Mr. Phillips says, you 'seem a pretty good sort of fellow,' Ned. I am quite sure that I shall feel much easier to have you attending directors' meetings than riding that great vicious

creature of yours over stone walls. Why won't you sell him, Ned, dear, and get something more reasonable to ride?"

"Oh — he's quiet as a lamb," said Alston, laughing.

"I should think he was — 'just about' — as John Leach's picture has it. He skipped from the ground with all four feet, the other day, precisely as I've seen lambs do. Well, Ned," she continued, drawing down her face, and speaking with great gravity, "if you have no regard for your life, you *might* consider your wife and child."

"That's the final, the unanswerable argument," he said, still laughing. "But please, little woman, don't be quite so absurd." He had his arm about her, and drew her to his side.—"You know," he went on, "that Pat and I had it all out in Ireland, and his conduct has been really quite exemplary since he found that I was a little too much

for him. He is so good a fencer that I hate to lose him." Alston looked at his watch. "I agreed," he said, "to see M—— a moment this evening, and, though it is late, I ought to go around there. I shall be back directly."

The streets of F—— seemed full of people on the second evening after the events already described.

Many men were, as usual, standing about the corners, but more were moving in a particular direction. It was evident that some event of importance had called them out in unusual numbers for a common purpose. Here and there was a little knot of young women and girls, who seemed to keep apart from the men for the most part, though they exchanged salutations with those of their acquaintance who passed. They indulged in loud talk and laughter, and

seemed to be enjoying their respite from work and the general novelty of the situation. Many of the men and a few of the older women turned into a doorway, within which the lighted staircase led to a hall in the second story of a large building, where a meeting of the "Associates of Toil" was assembling.

Upon a little platform at the end of the long room two men were writing at a table, and several others stood by them talking earnestly together. The hall gradually filled with men. Many of them were neatly dressed, others were in their working clothing; while yet others stood about in their shirt-sleeves, for the weather was not cold, and the lights and the presence of so many in the hall made the heat oppressive. Clouds of smoke from the pipes and cigars, in many mouths, floated through the open windows and settled about the low ceiling.

A few women were to be seen in the crowd; mostly middle-aged, with anxious faces looking eagerly toward the platform, as if from there they hoped to receive a solution of the vexed question of the hour, which it was evident that they, at least, did not regard with indifference.

The several days of the strike had, to a certain extent, also affected the spirits of the men present. For while here and there might be heard a joke or laugh, most of them were quiet and seemed inclined to take the meeting seriously, though there was no despondency visible among them, as yet. The loose settees sometimes used in the hall had been removed, and all were standing.

Presently a man left the group on the platform, and, raising his hand for attention, addressed the people. He was slenderly made, with a fine intellectual face, and his voice was clear and pleasant. His lan-

guage bore no traces of want of culture, and his whole presence inspired respect and confidence. It was William Darragh, a member of the general executive board of the "Associates of Toil." He spoke briefly, and forcibly:—

"My friends," he said, "the organization of which I am proud to be an official has been the means of enabling you to make this movement in the assertion of your rights, in a manly and united manner. The great corporation in whose employ you have been, has seen fit to pay you for your toil less than it is worth and commands elsewhere. Your respectful remonstrances and demands, individually and as an organization, have been disregarded, and at length your executive committee has, in the exercise of its authority, ordered that you cease to work on these unequal terms. In an orderly manner you have done so, as our

order prescribes. You seek not to injure any man, or to interfere with any vested rights in this assertion of your own. But you emphasize the simple proposition that for value we are entitled to equal value, and that no man or company can exact service from another without his consent and a fair compensation. There must be fair-minded men on the other side, and I believe that what you have done will effect the desired results. Meanwhile, do not forget that the ends of the 'Associates of Toil' are only to be obtained by peaceful and legal methods. Let no act of violence or even menace, injure the fair fame of the order and the cause of the laboring-man here and elsewhere. Law must reign supreme in this land, or our boasted freedom is but a synonym for license and anarchy, with which the 'Associates of Toil' have nothing to do. We work within the law, not otherwise."

The speaker pronounced these words with emphasis, and the audience responded with some applause. After a pause he went on.

"There has been a little delay, but I am glad to say that the superintendent is now willing to talk with me, and I have been, therefore, deputed to see him; I go from this meeting for that purpose. He is in possession of your schedule of wages; I understand him to be a just man,—"

"A hard man, you mane!" shouted a stout fellow, who was leaning against the side of the entrance door of the hall, smoking a short black pipe. The interruption was well received by others, who added, "That's so,"—"A damned hard man he is,"—and other corroborative exclamations. Darragh quietly waited, and, when the voices ceased, he continued in his former steady tone, and apparently waiving the

question of the superintendent's character. "At any rate," he said, "I shall see him, and to-morrow evening, at seven o'clock, meet me here, and I will tell you what can be done, if anything.

"My brothers of the local committee," he added, "inform me that there is no business for us now to transact, and I suggest that we adjourn until the time I have named."

He bowed and drew back, when a man in the middle of the hall called out, "Are any arrangements made to help us to live while we're out on strike?"

"It is hoped," said Darragh, returning to the front of the platform, "that the strike will be ended so soon that no aid will be required. But if we are disappointed, a finance committee will be appointed by you, and I hope enough will be forthcoming." He paused a moment, then added,

"The large number of these movements that are simultaneously taking place in the country are taxing our resources heavily, and I trust that prudent counsels will prevail in this case, so that the necessity will not arise for further drafts upon our burdened people elsewhere." He again bowed, and the people who had waited for his answer slowly filed out of the hall, discussing the prospect among themselves.

A number of the men collected on the sidewalk at the foot of the stairs, about one who was loudly expressing his views. He was one of those who had been upon the platform in the hall.

"I gave in to Darragh to-night," he said, as if in explanation, "but me and him don't agree about some things. He'll do no good with the superintendent, I don't believe. And he won't listen to anythin' bein' said about the scabs, neither. There's more'n

two hundred men that don't belong to us, and ain't in this strike. They're only out of the mill because there's nothin' for 'em to do. They're ready to go to work any minute, for all us." The man stopped and looked at the men about him: — "I'll tell you what it is, boys," he went on, in a still louder voice, "these fellows won't join the 'Associates of Toil,' and I'm damned if I work in that mill along side of 'em again."

"Nor I," said another. "Those men had ought to join us, or clear out entirely."

"Well," said an elderly man, with a shrewd, puckered little face, "hadn't we better wait and see what Darragh can do about the wages first? I struck to get better pay, I did, and — "

"If dey vill not vat you vants give — tak it then," struck in a guttural voice at the elbow of the last speaker. It was that of a man apparently a stranger to those present,

for they looked at him with some surprise when he spoke. He was a fat man, of a rather dirty and unwholesome appearance. His stubby, black beard embellished a rubicund visage, whose small, black eyes twinkled above the fat cheeks with sinister lustre. He spoke with a strong foreign accent, and with a breath redolent of beer.

"Ach," he continued, as he observed that he commanded the attention of the party; "vy idly do my broders stand? Der power in your hands ish — make then to dremple your obbressors!"

The men regarded him with increasing curiosity.

"Who are you?" asked one, after a pause; "I never saw you before."

The stranger took a large German pipe from his mouth, and struck an attitude intended to be imposing.

"I am of der towndrotten a savior —

an encourager," he said. "I gome alvays to help und deliver. Look you — I recognize no laws; mait all of dem to der poor subjugate. I deach you der lesson to annihilate dem laws, and of the blenty of der rich take for yourselves. Enough dere ish — ain't ut? Ach — yes, yes," he concluded, with an unctuous leer, resuming his pipe.

"But," said the old man, whom he had interrupted, "you can't take people's property without a fight."

"Ya wohl" — said the stranger — "den we fights. I myself will lead you. Broders! der worlt moves. I am of dose who move ut."

No response was made to his offer. The men looked doubtfully at this Moses, so ready to lead them out of the wilderness, and, apparently having but little faith in his doctrines, and being rather unfavorably impressed with the prophet himself, began to

slowly move off, and the anarchist was presently left alone.

"Wait," he muttered in German, "I make them to me listen by and by"; and with a somewhat depressed air he sought the nearest saloon.

Immediately after receiving authority from the directors, the superintendent had sent word to Darragh that he should be glad to talk over the schedule of wages with him if he would drop around to the mill office. He had heard considerable concerning this man, and believed him to be a more suitable negotiator than either of the members of the Local Board of the "Associates of Toil," whom he considered much inferior to many of the men they assumed to lead.

His message, however, had aroused their jealousy, and Darragh was with difficulty able to persuade them to allow of his re-

sponding to it. Darragh's only desire was to obtain a speedy and satisfactory conclusion of a strike that he himself had advised. He had no sympathy with certain radical views held by these others, and hoped that, if the corporation were willing to substantially grant the advances demanded, he could persuade the main body to vote a return to work without allowing these ideas to influence them.

He had carried his point, and went directly to the office of the mill, where he had agreed to meet Mr. Malcolm, from the meeting that he had addressed. He had been pleased that no difficulties had been suggested there, and felt now that it only remained for him to arrange matters with the superintendent, which he felt would not be difficult, to accomplish all the legitimate objects of the strike and end it at once.

"Mr. Darragh," said the superintendent,

as he entered the office, "I am glad to see you — and you alone. From what I know of you, I believe we can settle this matter, and have the men back at once. Provided," he added, "that I can induce the directors, who have taken this matter in hand themselves, to waive their principles, as some seem to regard the matter, and allow a settlement with your organization."

"I hope they will do so, I'm sure," said Darragh, cordially. "They tell me — those men who seem to know — that if your advice had been followed in the past, there would have been no occasion for a strike here."

"How do you like our scale of wages?" he added, after a pause.

"Well — but sit down, sit down," said Mr. Malcolm. "The schedule?" he continued; "I do not regard it as unreasonable.

If you'll shade down the back-boys and helpers — make that half a dollar a week less, I should say — and if you do not insist upon your peculiar method of equalizing those machine-shop wages, I have little objection — by the way," he said, interrupting himself, "in that machine-shop matter, I might as well say that I am entirely opposed to anything that tends, even in a slight degree, as here, to put a poor workman on a par with a better man. Your schedule there makes very few dollars a week difference to us, but I hate the principle of it. A good workman ought to have exactly the difference in pay over the unskilful and lazy one as the ratio of his work is to that of the other, in quantity and excellence. Their being at work the same number of hours does not go for much in a machine-shop. There is no piece work there, you know."

Darragh looked thoughtfully at the list that he was holding in his hand.

"This," he said, finally, "is one of the ways in which our order sometimes works injustice. I am only reconciled to it on the principle of the greatest good to the greatest number. You had better let it go, or, I fear, we shall have a strong kick against our settlement. However you, or I, for that matter, may feel about the thing, yet, if you'll excuse me, it is, after all, their own affair. If they are satisfied, we ought to be. The gross increase is slight, as you say. Do not, then, let us split on this, as, I confess, I dare not yield the point." He hesitated a moment. "I will," he said, "agree on what you suggest about the boys, and recommend that our people go to work on this basis. I do not understand that we disagree about the piece work prices for the weavers and spinners. Come, what do you say, Mr. Malcolm?"

The superintendent twisted his chair around, and thought a moment or two.

"Well," he said, slowly, "if the men are fools enough to stand it, I don't know that I ought to fight for them against their own order — but there is one thing more. Is there to be any trouble about the 'scabs,' as your brethren pleasantly style them? They comprise nearly three hundred men and women, and we do not propose to discharge one of them."

Darragh threw his head back, running his fingers through his thick, black hair, and presently answered with some deliberation.

"With regard," he said, "to the proper attitude of our order on this question, I am very clear. Our best men also," he added, modestly, "have given the subject a great deal of thought, and are satisfied that nothing can ultimately work us more injury than to assume a hostile position toward those

who do not choose to join our ranks. For a time some may be intimidated and driven in, as it were; but such recruits are of little value. Too many are already in the organization who sadly fail in understanding its high purposes, and seek to pervert it to selfish and unlawful ends, without adding to it, members who shall sow discord to be reaped hereafter — "

Mr. Malcolm, who was by no means enamoured of labor associations in general, or the "Associates of Toil" in particular, had been listening attentively to Darragh, and here interrupted him, speaking in his usual slow manner.

"Your order has in itself now," he said, "the seeds of dissolution. It cannot last. None of you with any self-respect can long endure its tyrannical interference in your private affairs. The thing is an anomaly in a free country — an imperium in imperio —

that can have but a brief existence here. It is bound to fall to pieces of its own unwieldiness, or be shivered to atoms by a storm of public disapproval, both within and without its ranks, when its full significance and baleful workings shall more fully develop themselves. Excuse my warmth, but I think your order is doing great mischief."

Mr. Darragh heard him with admirable temper, and answered quietly, "Certainly: there is some ground for your strictures upon us, I regret to say. All associations, of this or any other character, must share in the imperfections of the men who compose them. No movement for the amelioration of the condition of a large class of the people can be conducted without more or less incidental friction, and the infliction of temporary hardship upon many, perhaps. But, Mr. Malcolm, unless you fully grasp the ultimate objects of this association,

which are to elevate the laboring man, and broaden and ennoble his life, these incidental objections are seen by you out of all proportion, for you do not understand us at all."

"How?" exclaimed the superintendent. "Do you mean to say that these boycotts and the violence, injustice, and cruelties that your people are constantly practising are to be looked upon as mere 'incidentals' of some far-seeing policy of self-elevation and improvement? They are your methods, sir, not incidentals; and no such methods can lead to those high results."

"Violence," returned Darragh, warmly, "or lawlessness of any kind, the order strictly forbids and seeks to restrain" —

"I don't know about the forbidding," interrupted Malcolm, "but I do know about the not restraining."

"We do our best, sir," said Darragh.

"Well," said Malcolm, "your 'best' has been very bad indeed, so far. You seem to have discipline enough to successfully order free citizens to stop work, but you are not able to make them behave themselves like men — or you don't wish to — one of the two."

"I think you do us injustice, sir," said Darragh. "Our principles are opposed to all illegal methods. Boycotts are only permitted in extreme cases. Strikes we order, it is true, but always prefer to settle matters without them. Do you not see, Mr. Malcolm, that to lift the laboring man, to improve him intellectually and morally, we must improve his material environment; help him to the getting of larger wages, and more leisure for self-improvement. But it is difficult, I presume, for a capitalist to feel as I do about this."

"Mr. Darragh," replied the superintend-

ent, "I am now, to a certain extent, a capitalist. But I have been a day laborer, and do not forget it. My sympathies are all your way, whatever you may think about it. But your claim is an impossible one. Many desirable things are denied in this life to most of us; and before you bind together a number of hundred thousand men, with this ultimate purpose, and through such association bring upon many of them hardship, suffering, and disappointment, is it not your duty to be tolerably sure that the economic conditions of the country — of the civilized world, indeed — will admit of these radical changes? You cannot do these things by edict, beneficial as they may be. The laws of supply and demand are inexorable, and the minute you begin to force a change in them by law, or by a movement like yours, that minute the quick destruction of many industrial enterprises

has begun. What the end shall be, if you persist, you can foresee as well as I. Where will be the advantage to a man of large wages, when he can find no employment; and will your people desire an eight-hour rule, when every hour of the day will be at their disposal for want of occupation? Look ahead, man, look ahead."

"The question is not altogether free from difficulties, I am aware," said Darragh. "But we must strive for the best. We can but try, and if we fail it will not have been our fault."

"Yes, Mr. Darragh, if you, the men of intelligence, go ahead blindly, and mislead a host of people with sloppy rhetoric and vain hopes, and leave them worse off than they were before, it *will* be your fault. You ought to be fairly sure of your ground. You have no right to make experiments that involve so much possible injury."

Darragh colored, and his eye flashed. He arose from his chair and walked a moment up and down the room. Then, controlling his feeling, he said, almost pleasantly: "By the present strike, at least, Mr. Malcolm, we are likely to have the men back at work in a few days, with a material gain, if we agree, as I suppose we shall, when our discussion is over."

"Yes," said the superintendent, "we shall agree about the wages. But my directors must endorse my action, and your people, I take it, must back up your very sensible notions about the non-union men. When this has been done, you can indeed congratulate yourself upon one of the very few successful experiments of your order in righting a wrong."

"You admit that here was a wrong for us to right?"

"Yes, as prices go now; you are quite

welcome to that admission. But we have gone to our limit. If your folks strike again, as they logically must, some time, in order to make progress toward the goal you point them to, they cannot be successful. We can pay no more and live. Indeed, it is a problem as to how long we can pay this. Your strikes have forced a few men, here and there, to pay more than they can afford; but they cannot hold on very long. Most of those strikes have failed, however. And all fail when, as in the majority of cases, they hold out on some absurd point outside of the question of wages or hours."

"*Those* strikes ought to fail," said Darragh.

Mr. Malcolm rose from his chair. "We have had a long discussion, Mr. Darragh," he said. "I respect the desire you have to benefit the people, but regard your hopes of what you can do in this manner as in

the highest degree chimerical. Meanwhile, I cannot help adding that, while your order may gain an incidental advantage, now and then, the mischief you are working and will work to your own people, before this organization goes to pieces, is incalculable. In your experimental striving for the best, as you call it, you are marking off into a distinct and inferior class a large body of the citizens of a free country, to which I came, and in which I had a chance to better myself, because there were no classes. You are destroying their independence and crushing out their individuality. The 'Associate of Toil' can only stand on a dead level with his fellows, though it may be he is their superior in brains and pluck. From a free and untrammelled citizen you are transforming him into a mere unit of labor. All this in addition to the untold misery and trouble

that these movements entail to him and those dependent upon him."

"You do not justly estimate us," said Darragh. "We must be judged by results. Have not the trades-unions benefited the English workman?"

"Yes," replied Malcolm, "though the extension of the suffrage there has done far more. But it does not follow that your organization is to do good here. The conditions are essentially different. Because the Russian peasants need reforms, does that justify the mountaineer of Switzerland in raising the devil with his free institutions? Associations like the Carbonari, or the Vehmgericht of the middle ages, may have served some good purpose, in their villanous way; but what do we want of them here? You cannot generalize about these things. What may be beneficial in one period, or in one country, becomes an

absurdity and a menace to society in another. In the broad light of American freedom your order cannot endure, but will die like its wretched prototype, the Molly McGuires of Pennsylvania."

"Well," said Darragh, "that very light must act as a check, and will prevent what you seem to fear. We can restrain injudicious leaders, for the men have too much sense to follow them; neither can they go in for this nonsense about scabs and boycotting. We mean to be no check upon individual enterprise, and only wish to elevate all together, without menace to liberty or disobedience to the laws of the land. If the order can be conducted as its best friends wish, I believe — yes, I fervently pray — that it will yet effect much good." He paused a moment, and his face showed some emotion. Presently he added: "I shall report to our meeting to-morrow

night. I have confidence in our people, and believe they will vote to accept our settlement and go back to work, if your directors allow of it."

"If I can induce them," said Malcolm, "they will. Well, good-night to you," he added, shaking Darragh heartily by the hand as he started to go. "If such men as you could run your order, I doubt if it would do much harm. But you can't do it, Mr. Darragh. There are too many fellows who are getting a good living out of this agitation to allow disinterested men the control."

"There, again, I think you are wrong, sir," said Darragh, disregarding the personal compliment. "You will believe little good of us, I see. Well, good-night. *Our* trouble, at any rate, will soon be ended."

The directors met again in F—— on the following day, and the superintendent

strongly urged that the provisional arrangement made by him with Darragh be ratified, and the strike ended. In the discussion that followed, the president proved to be his steady ally, and, to Alston's great delight, displayed far more than his usual energy in holding the opposition to the question, and stripping it of rhetoric and buncombe.

The treasurer, Mr. Hartwell, had hitherto rather run the directors' meetings, and prided himself upon the *aplomb* with which he could lay down his views. He was considerably startled, therefore, on this occasion, at being more than once interrupted by Mr. Phillips in his remarks, and when that gentleman finally struck in on one of his best periods with the observation that "while this was all very interesting — very — yet it wasn't business — no dividends in it that he could see," Mr. Hartwell stam-

mered, lost his grip, and sat down in speechless extinguishment.

The influence, never before exerted, of a man controlling as much stock as the president, was, as it proved, salutary, and by a close vote both the questions — of the manner of adjustment and the schedule of wages submitted — were settled, and the superintendent was directed to start the mill at once.

Some suggestion being made as to the non-union workmen, the superintendent was strictly enjoined from discharging or refusing to accept the services of any such operatives, and it was ordered that they should be in all respects on the same footing as the others. This just action, it is needless to say, was unanimously agreed to.

The superintendent at once sent word to Mr. Darragh of the favorable action of the directors, and busied himself in prep-

aration for the resumption of work on the following day.

At a late hour that evening Mr. Malcolm was sitting at home. His mind was relieved of a heavy load, as he now saw (as he believed) the end of this difficulty. As he had said to Darragh, his sympathies were strongly with the laboring man when he saw him threatened with any real trouble; and this feeling was none the less genuine because unmixed with any maudlin sentimentality as to his general condition. He had been for the greater part of his own life a wage-earner, and had known the happiness and content that are quite compatible with that condition of life.

He knew, further, from his own experience and that of others, that wealth and happiness were by no means synonymous terms, and that all men were almost equally burdened with unhappiness, in various forms.

Nevertheless, he could not fail to see that the men had in this case stood out against an injustice, and felt glad that it was at last remedied, and that the miseries to them of a prolonged strike, of which he had had some experience himself in England and here, were averted.

There were employed in the B—— Mill a few French Canadians, and Mr. Malcolm, who wished to be able to communicate directly with all those in his employ, had been for some time spending much of his evenings in the study of the French language. Though an omnivorous reader and a man of wide information, he found that his fifty-odd years were not conducive to an easy acquirement of a new language. But he was a man of inflexible will, and, having determined to learn it, he persevered.

On the evening in question he had found himself unusually stupid, and was rather

sleepily sharing the Gallic grammarian's curiosity as to whether the urbane blacksmith had possessed himself of the silk umbrella of the skilful tinman, and other matters of like interest in well expressed French, when he was aroused by the housebell and a message that somebody wished to see him. Going into the next room, he found Darragh and two other men, whom he recognized as Murphy and Bradford, members of the local committee of the "Associates of Toil."

"I suppose everything is all right?" he said, as he seated his visitors in his sitting-room. "I sent around word to you," he added, addressing Mr. Darragh, "that the directors had agreed, and that the mill would open to-morrow morning."

Darragh made no reply, and the superintendent observed that his expression was troubled and sorrowful.

The man Murphy spoke: "We're not satisfied," he said, "with the way Mr. Darragh has undertaken to arrange matters. We don't propose to go to work wid the scabs again. If they take their old places, we don't want ours. We'll engage to fill their places wid good hands in a few days. We're agreeable to the wages you've settled, and will come into the mill to-morrow without those others."

The superintendent's disappointment was almost unbearable. He had remained standing, and now took a turn up and down the room; then he stopped in front of Murphy and regarded him intently.

"What," he said, quietly, and restraining his strong feeling, "is to become of these people whom you propose that we should deprive of work in this way?"

"We don't care a damn what becomes of them," returned Murphy, impudently.

"They'd be all right if they'd join us. If they won't, it's their hunt, not ours, what becomes of them."

"Why," said the superintendent, "are you opposed to their working? You have your work, why shouldn't they have theirs. They do you no harm."

"They do us harm," struck in Bradford; "they do us harm because they won't come with us. Why, they would have been at work all along if you'd let them, in spite of our strike. It's against the principles of the order of the 'Associates of Toil' to work along with scabs" —

Darragh here interrupted the speaker with some vehemence. "You are mistaken, as I have repeatedly said to you. This matter involves no principle whatever. You are all wrong about it. Mr. Malcolm," he said, turning to the superintendent, "we are just from the meeting at the hall that I

had supposed would have ratified our agreement. To my great surprise, and against my earnest advice, the men, by a decided vote, determined not to return to work unless you discharged those who are not members of the order. I admit frankly that it is a great mistake, but we can supply their places, and, in consideration of the important interests you represent, and of the great number of poor men, women, and children that need this work, I hope you can see your way to open the mill to us on these terms."

The superintendent did not answer at once.

"At my urgent solicitation," he finally said, "the company allowed me to negotiate with the 'Associates of Toil' instead of individuals. We have substantially agreed to your demands for increased wages. My instructions, however, forbid any discrimi-

nation as to wages or employment between you and these others."

"Is this not discretionary with you, then?" said Darragh.

"It is not," replied the superintendent; "and, if it were, you know my views. And, further," he added, in louder tones, "if I had been ordered to discharge them — these 'scabs,' as you call them — I should have resigned my position before I would have done it — I would cut off this hand," he said, stretching it toward them, "and throw it in the fire, before I would do that wicked thing! — Do you understand me now? The mill will open to-morrow," he continued, "and those men who desire work can have it on the new scale of wages. If your people don't want it, by Heaven! I will fill up with hands from elsewhere. Good-evening."

"Good-night to ye, sir," said Murphy,

rising. "But I warn you to bring no more scabs to this town — that's all, sir."

"Is this final, Mr. Malcolm?" said Darragh.

"Yes, sir — it is," returned the superintendent; and, taking up his hat, Darragh followed the others from the room.

Darragh was a thoroughly good man. He was a mechanical engineer by trade, of strong inventive turn of mind. Under many disadvantages he had been studious, and was exceedingly well read and intelligent. Believing ardently in the dignity of labor, and keenly alive to the limitations and hardships of many laboring men, he had gone into this movement with the purest and most disinterested motives, and had been conspicuous in the early struggles of the order for his faith in what he deemed its great mission: he had devoted much time and all his savings to its spread. As

it became a power, he had more than once had occasion to deplore the difference between its theoretical purposes and its practical working. He had begun to fear that it might fail of its real objects, and become only a vehicle for the uses of designing men, and incidentally the cause of much suffering and trouble that might be all in vain.

Sincere with himself, though as yet unwilling to admit it to others, he trembled for the future of this noble fabric, as he had thought it, that he had labored to rear, and was saddened as he saw what he had thought might have brought good to many, turning into an instrument of evil. He had hoped much from this strike in F—— and its anticipated pleasant ending. And now, in spite of his efforts, the thing was all going wrong. He looked forward to the hunger and suffering, the drunkenness

and possible violence that now impended, and, as he parted from the two men, to whose influence he largely attributed his failure, he cursed them in his heart. Walking home alone, under the October moon, the question of his own responsibility for these things arose strongly in his mind. Not for the first time, he asked himself whether he was blameless — whether, in his blind pursuit of the ignis fatuus of an ill defined and fanciful Utopia for the laboring man, he was not really working him great evil. The doubt was not a pleasant one, but it would not down. Like many another, he was tasting the bitterness of a mental awakening, in which he saw the misdirection and positive wrong of all his well meant efforts and sacrifices.

CHAPTER III.

CONTINUANCE OF THE STRIKE.

THE superintendent, as good as his word, opened the sluice-gates and rang the Bell of the mill on the following morning, at the usual hour. The operatives turned out in full force on the streets at the familiar summons, and a few turned into the mill yard and so into the mill, each going to his or her accustomed place. But when the quarter of an hour was up, and the belts should have been attached to the shafts and the machinery started, the great rooms still were almost empty. Scattered about, here and there, stood a few non-union work-people, numbering, in all the departments, perhaps three hundred, while below in the

street, outside of the gates and lining the wall of the flume, stood fifteen hundred or more, idly watching the mill or pointing derisively to the occasional faces seen in the windows.

A few policemen appeared and stood about by the mill gates, or sauntered through the crowd. But everything was, on this morning, entirely quiet, and there was no occasion for their services.

Those on the outskirts of the crowd stood quietly smoking their pipes and chatting together, while those nearer the gates had closely watched the few whom they had suffered to enter on this occasion without comment or outcry. But when these had all passed, their attention seemed still centred upon the same spot, and they watched the gate and each other with looks of uncertain expectancy, as if they feared — no doubt some hoped — that a break

might be made in that direction from among themselves.

When men are doubtful of their ground, and more than half believe that they are in the wrong, a sudden change of purpose and movement on the part of a few, often draws after them the whole number. There is little doubt that, on this occasion, had any considerable number of the well known "Associates of Toil," who stood near the gate, made up their minds to defy the vote of the night before and gone in, they would have been followed by the greater number of those watching them, and the strike would have ended then and there. Many, in their hearts, wished that this might be, but no man made the move. Each waited for his neighbor to take the initiative, and the opportunity passed.

Mr. Malcolm, who had been in the mill consulting with the foremen as to the appli-

cation of power in certain places, where a few looms and other machinery might be started with the small force present, now came down the steps of the office and approached the gate. He stepped through, and was in the midst of the crowd.

"Well," he said, raising his voice so that he could be heard by all about him, "are you not going to work this morning, on the new schedule of wages? The mill is open to you all."

Those about him made no reply. Some whistled a little, others turned away with their hands in their pockets. The superintendent turned to a quiet-looking man of middle age, whom he recognized. "McDonald," he said, "why don't you come in, man, and go to work? we are going to pay you what you asked."

The man looked on the ground sheepishly an instant; then, stiffening up, said,

"We can't work with the scabs, sir. You discharge them as have just gone in there, and we'll come fast enough."

"That's great nonsense, Mac," said Malcolm, "and you all know it."

He still spoke loudly, that all might hear: "I told your folks so last night. We can't refuse to employ these people; they've worked for us as long as any of you, and you have all worked alongside of them. Come, come — listen to reason," he added, "and don't injure yourselves for nothing. We prefer our old hands to new ones. We feel all right about the strike and want you back."

The men about him listened eagerly, as those who hear something they believe to be true and yet fear to act upon.

At this moment the executive committeeman, Murphy, pushed through the crowd and exclaimed, "You're keeping us all out

of work for the sake of a few scabs, Mr. Malcolm!"

Mr. Malcolm turned sharply and confronted him. Though habitually a man of slow speech, he now spoke quickly enough.

"I am talking to your betters, sir," he said, sternly. "I have had enough of you leaders, as you call yourselves." He turned his back on Murphy, who was inclined to reply, but was checked by those about him, who told him that they wanted to hear what Malcolm had to say. "Why," continued Mr. Malcolm to the men, "do you allow such fellows to lead you around by the nose? Vance," he called to our old acquaintance, who stood back a little, and did not seem desirous of catching his eye: "Vance, you are a sensible fellow; can't you persuade your friends to listen to reason!"

"Well, I see it's of no use," he con-

tinued, after a pause, during which no one made any reply. "It begins to look as though we should have to get other help, though we don't wish to do it. We had much rather have *you*." He waited a moment looking into the men's faces with his strong and kindly gaze. Then he turned to a policeman. "Clear the way and keep the gate open," he said, shortly, and walked toward the office. As he turned his back, he heard Murphy's voice call out, "Three groans for the superintendent!" and a storm of groans and hisses went up, mainly from the farther part of the crowd, among those who had not heard what he had just been saying. Mr. Malcolm turned and stood quietly facing the crowd a moment, while the noise lasted, and he noticed that from the men to whom he had been speaking no sound arose, except that one or two exclaimed, "shut up" — "stop that

damned noise!" He recognized their friendly interference with a little smile, and, turning again, went into the office.

The crowd hung about a while; then it gradually thinned out, and filtered slowly away through the narrow streets in the vicinity.

But the place remained, throughout the continuance of the strike, a favorite rendezvous for the more turbulent, who could here collectively manifest their feelings in the hearing of those with whom they had so unwisely chosen to remain at issue. As the non-union men continued to enter the mill, and their numbers subsequently grew larger, they were here nearly sure each day of considerable attention from the strikers, which often assumed a character that rendered police protection necessary, as will be seen.

Vance had felt very uncomfortable when

he found himself addressed by Mr. Malcolm, whom he respected and liked, and he was one of the first to leave the place after the superintendent had returned to the office. He had not been at the meeting of the "Associates of Toil" on the preceding evening, and, when he received word that the strike was to continue unless the non-union men should be refused employment, he had not been altogether satisfied. At that time he did not, it is true, realize the gravity of the error, or the improbability of the corporation yielding to such a demand, though he realized its injustice; nor did he have any purpose of resisting the mandate of the order. But he was an intelligent man, and it appeared to him that a mistake had been made, and, for the first time, he felt some uneasiness as to the result.

At breakfast on this morning, his wife, who, with a woman's quick intuition, saw

more clearly than himself how matters were tending, urged him to throw up his membership in the order, and go back to work. "They can't do more than call you a 'scab,' John," she said, "and you'll be doing right and ought not to care."

"Well," he replied, "I don't like the name, that's a fact."

"Here's the mill," continued his wife, "come round and given the advance of wages that was asked, right off, and now these 'Associates' won't take it because they won't discharge these folks that you've always worked with, and who have got to get a living as well as you. You yourself, John, struck in the first place to help some one else, not yourself; and now you must keep on striking to *hurt* some one else. It's all wrong, the whole of it; that's what I say."

"You and Darragh seem to agree about this, Mary."

"He thinks so too, does he?" she inquired.

"Yes," he answered. "They say he put it to them very strong last night. I wish I'd been there."

"Now I'm sure I'm right," continued Mrs. Vance. "Why *don't* you leave them, John?"

"Oh, no, Mary," he said, "that won't do. The mill can't like it, but they'll have to bounce the 'scabs,' I suppose."

"Yes — and that *would* be a nice thing for them to do," returned his wife, sarcastically. "John," she added, solemnly, "they'll never do it in this world, never. You mark my words."

"It would be rather hard on them," he said, thoughtfully; "and some of them pretty good folks, too. Take those Cottings and Westfalls, now; I'd hate to see them hurt. But they can get work somewhere else, I suppose."

Mrs. Vance did not reply at once, but she looked very grave as she stirred her cup and gave the children some more bread and butter. She had been brought up on a comfortable New England farm, had received a fair education, and was intending to undertake the district school for the winter term, when handsome John Vance came along and captivated her by his beauty and easy good-humor. His superior, perhaps, in some respects, her love for him was unbounded; and he had deserved it, for he was a good husband and a thorough and steady workman.

With the ingrained ideas of the respectability of work natural to a farmer's daughter, she felt no repugnance to his occupation, which was that of a foreman in the machine-shop, where his skill and industry earned him large wages. But she had never become accustomed to the surroundings of a

factory village, nor had been able to find much in common with the companions of his labor. She had been very inquisitive regarding the order of the "Associates of Toil" when her husband joined it, — more, indeed, because he was urged to do so, than from any special belief in its value.

Mrs. Vance's strong American common-sense had instinctively revolted from what she could see bore a foreign stamp, and was, to her mind, uncongenial to the soil, and opposed to the spirit of the free citizens among whom she had been reared. She now began to discern its power to work injustice.

"John," she said, after a pause, "it's a sin. How would you like to be thrown out of work because you didn't choose to join something or other?"

"I about agree with you and Darragh, Mary," he said; "but the poor scabs have

got to go, I'm afraid, in spite of anything I can do, and I had better stand by the order now and see how things come out. If I turned scab, I'd have to be discharged with the rest, directly; so where's the use."

Mrs. Vance saw that her husband's mind was made up for the present, and forbore to urge him farther.

"There is the bell," he said in a moment, getting up from the table. "I guess I'll go over and see if the mill really opens this morning, as Mr. Malcolm swore it should."

He found that the mill was really opened, as has been already related. As he walked away from the gate, he thought over the position of affairs. It really looked as if the corporation had some conscience about this thing, and he wondered to himself whether the "Associates" were not going to be beaten, after all. A man joined him as he slowly walked toward the main street.

"Lots of bluff about old Malcolm, isn't there?" he said, as he overtook Vance.

"Well," replied he, "I never have thought so before, and I'm not sure of it now."

"You don't mean to say," said the other, "that the mill are going to hold out any time for the sake of these scabs? Don't you believe it. They like money too well, and they don't want to get left behind, with all their new patterns half made. No, sir; they'll come round all right in a day or two. They'll get rid of these fellows easy, perhaps, but it'll be done."

Vance made no reply, but he had a premonition that forbade his sharing this view. He felt depressed and anxious, and when, as they passed a groggery, his companion suggested a drink, he went in, wishing for the moment to drive out of his mind the doubts that oppressed it.

It unfortunately required more than one glass of whiskey to do this, and, as the strike continued, day after day this refuge from thought was sought more steadily. With bitter secret tears, his wife saw him falling into habitual intemperance, and ruin and misery staring them in the face.

CHAPTER IV.

MINISTER AND DAUGHTER. — COERCIVE MEASURES.

IN the quiet parlor of a little house that stood near and was dominated by the great white wooden church, formerly the only one in F——, in the pleasantness of whose sloping green, with its two or three great elms, it comfortably shared, a young lady sat busied with the needle-work so indispensable to every New England woman's fingers when not otherwise employed. Her face, not beautiful, still lacked few of the elements of womanly attractiveness, and her figure, tastefully dressed, told, by its perfect curves and easy poise, of a health and vigor that in no wise detracted from the refinement that characterized her

whole appearance. She was the daughter of the Congregational minister of F——.

Her father sat by the table, reading a copy of the Andover Review, in which humorous periodical he appeared to be much interested; though perhaps not wholly pleased with the contents, if one might judge by the subtle changes of expression that passed over his face, and the frown with which from time to time he absently looked over his glasses at his daughter, while endeavoring to digest some doctrine that was rather too fine for his robust theological taste.

A widower for many years, living alone with his daughter, he was in the habit of sitting in her company rather than seeking the seclusion of his own study. They were fast friends, and her presence was never regarded as a hindrance to his writing or study.

The minister was old in years, and per-

haps a little old in the fashion of his beliefs. He was a simple, God-fearing man, of good parts and ripe scholarship. Fitted to adorn a wider field of usefulness, he was well content to do faithfully his work where the lot had fallen to him. He adhered to, and taught uncompromisingly, the doctrines that had been the reliance of the church for eighteen centuries, not esteeming the man of the present day as especially wiser than his predecessors, though quite as prone to evil.

For the rest of it, his charity for all men was boundless, and his generosity and kindness of heart, allied to a sad want of worldly wisdom, almost amounted to weakness.

"Father," said his daughter, laying her work in her lap, "I was at Mrs. Vance's house to-day, again. She is in great trouble. Things are going from bad to worse with them, and with all the people on the strike."

"Yes, Ellen," said the minister, laying down his book, after taking off his glasses and placing them between the leaves to mark the place; "yes, I know it too well. These poor people have made a great mistake, and seem unable to take the simple course necessary to repair it."

"Mrs. Vance tells me," his daughter continued, "that her husband keeps on drinking hard; that their money is about gone, and she does not know what they are to do. All the people I see are every day in worse straits, and there are, of course, others that I have not reached, still worse off, perhaps. I went to see that poor girl that lives over the Vances; and, father, it is terrible! — that poor creature has a little child, and they have not had enough to eat."

"It is indeed terrible," he replied. "You must have her on our list, my dear."

"Yes, I have put her name down, and

she shall not suffer so again. But our list is very long, and growing fast."

"Couldn't you induce this girl to return to work for the sake of her child?" asked her father.

"I tried. I told her the order would never notice that one little woman had left them. She seemed to want to, like many of them, but was afraid, poor thing. Father, what should we do if it were not for the money that has been so generously given us by others for these people? We have so little of our own, and I think I should die if I could do nothing to help them. It is hard enough, as it is, to see so much suffering and be able to do so little."

"Well, my daughter," said the minister, "we will do the best we can. That Catholic priest is, I have been glad to find, doing all that he can, too. Really," he added, thoughtfully, "he seems a very worthy man."

The door-bell rang at this moment, and presently George Brayton entered the room.

The minister leaned back in his rocking chair, and extended his hand pleasantly to him.

"Ha, Juvenis venit ab agro," he said, with a smile; "how do you do, George? and how is your good mother?"

"We are both well, thank you, Mr. Hardy," said Brayton, who, as the accepted suitor of his daughter, was by no means an unfrequent visitor at the minister's house. The old gentleman, recognizing his manly character, was quite indifferent to his ignorance of the classics, and his devotion to blooded horses and cattle, but had intimated that he should make rather a point of his joining the church before their marriage, and, as George was a little slow about this, their courtship was not as short as he had hoped it might be.

They chatted a few minutes, when Mr. Hardy remarked that he must let Ellen amuse him, as he had not quite finished his reading, and again lost himself in the rather doubtful pleasure found in his pamphlet.

"I was afraid," said George, "that I should not be able to come to-night, Ellen."

"What," she said, "could keep you, George?"

"You may well wonder what could keep me away from you," he answered; "but this strike is giving us all a great deal of trouble, as well as the persons directly interested."

"Yes," she said, "I am very sure of that, for I share in the troubles of these unfortunates every day, and have the thought of them with me night and day."

"That is not the only difficulty," he said, "though I feel sorry for them, too."

"What other phase of the matter gives

you trouble?" she asked. "I wish," she continued, "you would explain the whole matter to me. On the one side, I hear every-day complaints at once of the corporation and of the 'Associates of Toil'; and, on the other, blame is laid on the strikers and the order. I have a confused idea of the question without knowing the facts fully. When we have been alone," she added, with a little smile, "you always seem to have preferred another topic, and I fear I have been a little unwilling to interrupt you."

George answered her smile with a loving look, and, glancing furtively at Mr. Hardy, who continued immersed in his book, reached over and seized and pressed her hand.

"Well," he said, after a pause, "this thing has now been going on a number of weeks, and the strain is getting to be con-

siderable all around. What appeared to be on the point of settlement at once now seems hopelessly prolonging itself. The whole thing turned, you know, on the demand of the strikers that the company discharge the men who did not belong to their order; for their requests in the matter of wages were granted."

"Was not that a very unjust thing to those men?" asked Ellen.

"Nothing could be more so," he answered. "It was utterly unjustifiable, and no honorable man or corporation could possibly entertain it for a moment. This Mr. Darragh, of whom you have heard, is a very sensible fellow, and did his best to prevail with the men to give up this absurd requirement after he had arranged the wages for them, but without success. The local leaders seemed to have the greater influence. They are rather bad

fellows, and have now with them a sort of foreign socialist, whose talk does the men no good, though many look on him as a 'fraud.' At any rate, they have held the men thus far, though their resources are about exhausted. What the outcome is to be, I cannot say."

"Is not this Mr. Darragh the chief among them?" asked Ellen.—"Why, then, do they not obey him?"

"I confess," answered George, "that I am unable to explain the working of their machinery. They sometimes obey submissively the orders of a supreme head, and again appear to be at the mercy of the local junta or Executive Committee. On the other hand, questions are often put in their general meetings and carried by a majority of members. Darragh seems to have done all that he could. He has addressed meeting after meeting, and worked

with the people outside. Many agree with him, but seem afraid to antagonize the opposition ring. It's a wretched state of things."

"They have told me," said Ellen, "of aid they have received from some source, though it appears to be very insufficient. I could not quite understand about it."

"Oh, that arises from the contributions of laboring men elsewhere," he replied. "If there were only a few strikes at a time in the country, they might be sustained in this way; but there are many now, and the call for funds cannot be met. These people are not receiving half enough. Mr. Alston has been here a great deal, and tried to make up matters in various ways — you know how much money he is spending every day, through you and elsewhere, to help the needy."

"Yes," said Helen; "he has given me a

great deal. What we could have done for these poor women without the help from you and him, I do not know."

"I've not done much; but you have only to bring a case of distress to Alston's attention, and he seems to forget entirely the fact that this strike is a direct injury to his own property, and to lose sight of the unreasonable conduct of the very persons whom he puts his hand in his pocket to help."

"He is a noble man!" said Ellen.

"Yes; I could hardly have believed it of a fellow brought up as he has probably been. Why, he has gone about among the hands himself in the most energetic way trying to make them hear reason. They like him, but seem afraid to follow his advice. He came across that Kohler, the anarchist, the other day, in a crowd, and, hearing some of his vile talk, Alston expressed his opinion of him with entire freedom.

Kohler 'sized him up,' as they say, and sneaked off in silence, the men about only laughing at him. Very fortunately, the anarchist does not appear to be a magnetic sort of man.

"What troubles me, Ellen, is that while the leaders are losing their grip and know it, they still have a hope of doing something that shall drive the mill to terms by scaring out the new men they've taken on. There have been a good many individual outrages and assaults, and they are increasing. I'm afraid of some organized violence against the property of the mill, or against these 'scabs,' as they call them."

"Yes —" said Ellen; "what a very unpleasant name it is, by the way."

"These associations," said Brayton, "seem desirous of giving the outsiders the most odious of names."

"It is not altogether a bad idea from their

point of view," said Ellen. "Some might join to avoid such a name as that."

The minister had continued reading during the conversation: but at this moment he laid down his book again.

"George," he said, "when is this thing to be over? I see want, distress, and violence everywhere."

"It *is* everywhere, sir," replied Brayton; "and, as I tell Ellen, I fear there may be worse in prospect. We have a large police force now for F——. A detail is on duty here almost every night from M——, and we may need them all; for the leaders and the gang they keep about them are getting desperate."

"Can the town do nothing to supply the wants of this suffering population?" asked Mr. Hardy, who was far more alive to this branch of the subject than the one just suggested.

"It is a question with us," said Brayton, "whether we have a right to extend the public aid to people who have plenty of work at wages they admit are satisfactory, and will take neither ; but"—

"What is that ?" said Ellen, suddenly ; "don't you hear those shouts ?" Brayton arose, and, going to one of the front windows, opened it and listened a moment.

"I think I had better go down street and look around a little," he said quietly to Ellen.

She looked in his face, and was not deceived by his quiet tones.

"George, don't go," she said, quickly, also in a low voice. "It is something serious, I'm afraid — and you will get into danger."

"Nonsense, darling," he said ; "it's nothing of the kind, probably ; and none of them have anything against me.

"Well, good-evening Mr. Hardy," he said,

in a louder tone. "I ought to be starting for home."

Ellen followed him into the hall.

"Do be careful, George," she said as he kissed her. "All right, I will," he replied, affectionately but carelessly, and went out.

She returned to the sitting-room, and, again opening the window, stood with the cool evening air fanning her face, that had suddenly grown very pale. Her hand was pressed to her bosom, as if to still the beating of her heart, while she listened intently. The next moment she drew back as she heard the sound of many feet approaching the house, and six or eight rough-looking men ran by. She could hear their loud words, and noticed sticks or other weapons in their hands. As she leaned forward and watched them, she saw a lady and gentleman cross the street in the moonlight, as if to avoid them. The sound of their heavy

steps soon died away, and, though listening long, Ellen heard nothing more.

"Had you not better close that window, my dear?" said her father, who, in his absent way, had been aware of nothing unusual. "It is rather a chilly evening to sit out-of-doors, as I seem to be doing just at present."

Brayton, upon leaving the minister's house, ran in the direction of the noise, and, as he passed down the street, met the party of men that startled Ellen a moment or two later. He stopped as they brushed by him without recognition, but, overhearing a remark of one of them, judged that, instead of meditating mischief, they were running from the scene of disorder, and so kept on his way. He proved to be right in this conjecture, for, though the loud cries had now ceased, he heard voices as he reached the head of a narrow way

that made out of the main street, and, adjusting his revolver in his hip pocket, he instantly turned the corner and walked rapidly toward a group of men a few rods down the alley. They proved to be members of the town police, who were talking with two non-union men, whom, it appeared, they had just rescued from a gang of ruffians, by whom they had been dogged and finally assaulted in this out-of-the-way corner. One man, standing handcuffed in charge of a policeman, was the only one of the cowards who had not been quick enough to escape when the officers appeared. This, fortunately, had been in time to prevent serious, if not fatal, injury to the two poor fellows whom they found defending themselves manfully against overwhelming odds. Brayton heard the details of the affair with rising indignation.

"Keep that scoundrel safe," he said to

the policemen, pointing to the prisoner, "and have him up to-morrow morning; and spare no pains to get track of the others. You say you recognized none of them? Did not *you?*" he added, turning to the men who had been assaulted, as the officers shook their heads.

"No, sir," answered one of them; "we are strangers here, and know hardly any one. We only took on at the mill last Monday."

"Well," said Brayton to the police, "find them out, if possible. There have been enough of these outrageous performances in F——, and it seems very queer that these rascals can get away every time."

Brayton spoke sharply, for he felt very keenly the disgrace resting upon the town that could not protect its citizens.

"You should not blame us, sir," said one of the officers. "These fellows lay for

their men and pounce on them, and off they go before any one can get to them. Only for these two making such a good fight, they'd have been half killed before we could possibly get here. We cannot be everywhere, Mr. Brayton, though we try hard enough."

"Well, well," said Brayton, more pleasantly, "do the best you can. We'll make an example of this gentleman, at any rate. Which way are you going?" he asked the two men.

"We're on our way home, over to the south tenement block."

"Come along, then," said Brayton; "I'll see you home. No!" he said to a couple of the policemen, who took up their march behind them; "you lose no time, all of you, in trying to head some of that gang to-night. They went up the street, and you might find them together. I can take care

of these men, for I have my seven-shooter with me. Is your arm much hurt?" he asked of one of the men, who held up his right arm with the other hand.

"Not much, I guess," said the man; "but a fellow fetched me a clip with his club just in the place where I got a bullet-wound twenty-odd years ago, and it's rather a tender spot. It hurts some, but it's nothing serious."

"Ah, yes — too bad," said Brayton. "These strikers are some of them as cruel as they are unjust."

"If they have no reason for pitching into us," continued the man, warmly; "they ought at least to give us fair play in a fight, damn them! It is too bad, sir," he went on, "that a man can't earn a living in a free country, without having to fight for his life at the same time. Is there no law, or do these 'Associates' run the country?"

"There is law;" replied Brayton, — he stopped and laid his hand on the man's shoulder, — "and you'll find hereafter, I hope," he continued, "that the 'Associates of Toil' don't run F——, at any rate."

"Well," said the man, "I hope not. I think we have a right to *work*, if nothing else."

"It would seem so," said Brayton, with a laugh. "It is certainly very little to ask of society — a chance to work in peace. I suppose," he continued, as they walked along together, "you knew about the strike when you came here for work?"

"Yes, sir," answered one. "But we were thrown out of work three weeks ago by the strike over in H——. The mill had to shut down, you know, and when we heard that these men were only standing out because of some non-union men being allowed work, we didn't see why we hadn't a right

to come. We ain't 'Associates of Toil,' but if they was out on a matter of wages we'd never cut under them, 'Associates' or no 'Associates.' That's fair enough, ain't it?"

"I should say it was," said Brayton. "Why is it that you are not members of the order?" he asked, after a moment.

"Well, sir," replied the man, who was a straight, tall fellow, "I prefer to be my own master. I was a soldier in the war"—

"Ah! there's where you were wounded?" said Brayton.

"Yes. I didn't mind being officered round there, for I knew the need of it. Every one there had to obey some one else — officers and all — except, perhaps, old Grant," added the man, with a little laugh. "But when they came around about this 'Associates of Toil' business, I made up my mind I didn't want any of it."

"Didn't you like the style of its manage-

ment, or what was the trouble?" asked Brayton.

"I want to do as I think best about my work," replied the other. "With them, first it's orders and then it's voting, and you don't know where you are. But," he added, emphatically, "it's pretty sure to be where you don't want to be, every time. As to management — well, I can see that a few men manage it so that they can get a living out of it, no matter what becomes of the crowd."

"Don't you think," asked Brayton, "that you men will be forced to join some time?"

The other man, who had hitherto been a listener, now said, quickly: —

"Never! They can't force us nor a good many others into that thing. I've worked," he continued, "for hard men and easy men; but, whichever they are, I'll make my own bargains. And if I see a chance to get on

fairly, I'm going to take it without asking leave of the 'Associates of Toil.' No bummers and shirks are going to tie me down to their rates."

"That's the way of it, is it?" said Brayton, who was interested, and liked to draw them out. "It tends to keep you all down to one level?"

"Yes, sir—that's just the way of it. And they can blow about its being a help to the laboring man, as much as they like—it keeps more down than it helps up."

"How is it," asked Brayton, "that so many have gone into it and stay in?"

"Well," said the man, "that's hard to say. Many good men thought at first it might be a good thing, and some think so yet, perhaps; but I know lots of them that are sick of it. The poor workmen like to be taken care of by executive committees and such like, and to be as important and

have as much to say as those who work harder and do better with what they get. It's that kind of men that stand most by the order, and can't see that it's doing them harm."

"Hallo," said Brayton, stopping; "here we are at the south tenement. The police keep these fellows away from here pretty much, don't they?"

"Oh, yes — but we hear talk round that they're going to blow us up some time."

"I reckon," said Brayton, "that we'll prevent that. It seems to me," he added, looking at the stars, as he stood, with his hands in his pockets, leaning against the fence that ran along the front of the building, "as if you men had rather the best notion of this labor matter. And, in spite of the treatment you have just received, I am inclined to think that many of the

'Associates' in this town would agree with you to-day."

"I'm sure of it," said one of the men; "though there's some of them mighty ugly and determined."

"Now," said Brayton, drawing his self-cocking seven-shooter from his pocket, "you had a hard time to-night, and I feel very sorry about it. I will lend you this pistol," he said, handing it to the old soldier, "if you'll agree to carry it and shoot down the first scoundrel who attacks you again. And when you," he added, turning to the other man, "are at the police station to-morrow as a witness on the trial of that fellow, I'll give orders that they give you another, on the same understanding. It won't be as good a one as mine, but it will be good enough."

The men thanked him, and, bidding them good-evening, he walked down to the stable

for his horse, as it was too late to return to the minister's that evening. He thought, as he went along, of the change that had come over this New England village, where he knew even his own safety required him to go armed after nightfall; and where, day and night, a large number of peaceable men and women, who were trying to get their living, were liable to insults and violence; were, indeed, except for strong police protection, in far more danger of life and limb here, in a state hitherto famed for the wisdom of its laws and the safety and freedom of its citizens, than in those lawless western communities in which he had lived. He thought of Darragh and many good quiet men whom he knew in the town, who belonged to the order of the "Associates of Toil," and he marvelled that such men could not see the wickedness of giving their moral support to an organization that,

while it denounced violence in high-sounding phrases, yet countenanced, and suffered to remain in its ranks, the perpetrators of these outrages; and, indeed, never scrupled to avail itself of any temporary advantages that might be occasionally gained by such nefarious tactics.

Brayton was aroused from these meditations by the rumble of a heavy two-horse wagon that was pulled up suddenly just as it got by him.

"Why, that *is* yew, George," said the voice of Mr. Bradshaw, who was perched high at the forward end of a load of farm produce. "Ye're out pritty middlin' airly, ain't ye?"

"I call it pretty middling late," said Brayton; "but I'm no later than you."

"Oh — I'm goin' into th' city with a load er truck. — Cal'late to be to th' market by four o'clock in the mornin' ye see. Naow,

George, I ain't in no great uv a hurry," continued Mr. Bradshaw, letting his reins drop loosely, and throwing one leg over the other knee. "I'd like to see if me and you couldn't settle suthin' 'bout them heifers. Ye see"—

"Now, Mr. Bradshaw," interrupted Brayton, laughing, "you may just go to thunder; I'm not going to stand here trading cows in the middle of the night, by a long chalk. So you just 'hump' yourself for B——, and I'll drive home and get to bed. Good-night."

"Sho, naow, George — hold on jest a minnit," said the farmer, picking up his reins, and starting the team to keep up with Brayton, who, suiting action to word, was walking on.

"I like them critters, George," he continued, walking his horses alongside. "Naow I railly'd like ter talk it over a piece with ye—"

"I'll be up by your place some day and stop," said Brayton.

"That's it — naow dew, Georges' — soon's ye can, too," said Mr. Bradshaw, eagerly.

"Half Durham, ye said, George?" he called, as Brayton turned into the stable yard. "Waal, good-night, good-night"; and Mr. Bradshaw resumed his weary journey to market, while Brayton, waking up the stable boy, got his mare put in, and drove home.

CHAPTER V.

A DIRECTOR.

MR. ALSTON'S interest in the differences between the corporation and its employés, as we have heard from Brayton, had not flagged. Determining, when the trouble first arose, to make a careful study of the matter, the later phases of the difficulty and the singular position assumed by the strikers only had the effect of farther stimulating his curiosity, and affording him a more complete illustration from which to study the general questions suggested. He inherited a large interest in the property at his father's death, but had hitherto attached little importance to his position as a director, had rarely attended a meeting, and looked upon the B—— mill

only as a source of income when, as usually, it paid, and of annoyance when it passed a dividend.

He had been thoroughly aroused, as we have seen, by the unjust attitude that the corporation had so long maintained toward its employés, in the matter of wages. It had made a strong impression upon his careless mind, and he began to comprehend the fact that the employment of thousands of people carried with it certain responsibilities toward them. That mill hands were men and women — not cotton, as Mr. Hartwell expressed it, to be paid for and thought no more of; that their needs, their deserts, and even their sentiments and prejudices, were entitled to fair consideration. And if, according to the popular aphorism, a corporation had, as such, no soul wherewith to recognize these things, that fact did not excuse its officials from

the possession of theirs. He saw, in the light of his own involuntary injustice, how hard it was for the individual workman to stand up for his rights against a rich corporation that had help offering in all directions; and that, unless a certain abstract justice characterized its dealings, the laborer was likely to go to the wall. And he now began to see the *raison d'être* of labor organizations. Turning his attention to the order of the "Associates of Toil," he had abundant evidence before him that, while the shortcomings of human nature rendered it sometimes difficult for business relations between men to adjust themselves with absolute fairness, the same reason prevented this organization from accomplishing any good purpose. That, while intended in its inception to be of present benefit to him, it was already becoming a positive injury to the laboring man, and that, from its great

numbers and the ease with which it could be manipulated by bad men, it might, if it continued too long, menace social order and the liberties of the people; while the hope of bringing about by these arbitrary means the ultimate theoretical objects it professed to have in view was the impossible dream of mere enthusiasts. In the case before him, he had been at first glad to find the way clear to repair the injustice of the employer, and that, as he had thought, it was so easily accomplished. But when he found that his espousal of the cause of the workmen was rendered nugatory by their own folly and injustice, he had felt the sincerest regret and disappointment.

All these contradictions puzzled and distressed him, and being much of his time in F—— during the intervening weeks, he had personally seen and reasoned on various

occasions with one and another of the men whom he had met, in the endeavor to persuade them to abandom their wrong position and end the strike. His belief in the mischievous character of their organization was intensified when he found how many of its members in F—— were not in sympathy with its attitude on this question, and were prevented from going back to work at the new and satisfactory rates of wages by their fears alone.

For several weeks he had largely given up his usual employments and recreations and appeared to think of little else but the affairs of the corporation and of the striking operatives.

He revived his studies in political economy, neglected since leaving college, and spent many hours in the factory, learning the methods of work and the relations of the men to the machinery that they used.

In short, the practical part of manufacturing. His club knew him no more, and, as he never had time now to follow the hounds, the villanous Pat was daily doing his best to kill the plucky little groom who ventured to give him his exercise.

Alston was told one morning while at breakfast that this person was below and desired to speak with him.

"Perhaps," suggested his wife, "some one has sent you an offer for Pat. I hope so, I'm sure."

"I doubt it extremely," replied Alston. "He's rather too well known, I fancy, for that. Indeed," he added, "I should almost be afraid to sell him, for fear of a future action for criminal negligence."

"Ned," said his wife, looking around the tea urn with a solemn face, "does the thought of your criminal negligence in *riding* that horse never occur to you?"

"Ada!" he replied, with the expression of a judge when about to pronounce sentence of death, "it does. I have often been afraid," he continued, "that that horse would break his neck, and that I was wrong to thus ride him to his doom."

Mrs. Alston deigned no further remark, but got out her handkerchief with a considerable flourish.

Alston laughed. "My dearest," he said, "why are you so ridiculous on this one subject, when you are so exceedingly sensible on all others. Abnormally so, in fact,—for a woman," he added, musingly.

"For a woman, indeed," exclaimed his wife, replacing her handkerchief with a look of great disgust. "I am very much obliged to you, I am sure. Really you are quite too complimentary this morning, Ned. Pray, are we to see you at lunch to-day, sir," she added, "or are you to be in F——, as usual?"

"F——, as usual, I fear," he said.

He arose from his chair, and went around the table.

"Come," he said, holding out his hand, "let us part in all charity. Upon more mature reflection, I feel that I have done you an injustice. You are the best of your sex, it is true, but you are not too unpleasantly sensible, after all—"

"Go away,—wretch!" said his wife, laughing, as she pushed away his hand; "your conduct is simply disgraceful—there!"

"Well," he said, "I think I had better go down and see what that little beggar James has to say. I think I know pretty well. I hope he will treat me better than you have, at all events."

"How are you, James?" he said, as he entered the room where the horsy-looking little Englishman, with mutton-chop

whiskers and saddle-bowed legs, was waiting.

The groom touched his forehead with a forefinger, as he arose from his chair.

"What brings you to town to-day," continued Alston; "nothing the matter with Major or Pat, is there?"

"Major, sir, is hall right," replied the man; "but hit's about that 'ere 'oss Pat, Mr. Halston, that I've come hup, sir. 'E's that wicked, sir, that 'e'll do hisself a mischief, I'm afraid, let alone me, if 'e ain't ridden some, sir."

"I'm afraid he will," said Alston; "I wonder if I hadn't better have him shot?"

"Oh, no, sir, 'e's too good a 'oss!" said the groom, quickly, his admiration for the high qualities of the animal overcoming his disgust at his bad conduct. "I honly wanted to know," he went on, "hif me or 'Enery, or some of the gentlemen as might

want, could 'ave 'im hout once or twice a week?"

"Oh, yes," said Alston; "hunt him yourself, or let any good rider have him that wants him. They can't hurt him, confound him! It don't much matter, so that he don't hurt them. By the way," he added, "I was going to F—— to-day. Suppose I take the train with you and ride that brute across from the kennels. It's about twenty-five miles over to F——, and I can take considerable out of him, I should say. I'll ride him back to-morrow, or next day."

"Well, sir," replied the groom, doubtfully, "you'll 'ave your 'ands full, I dessay; and the 'ard 'igh-road's none too good for ees legs. But Pat and you, sir, seem to get on together better than 'e does with most others. As for the pounding," he continued, thoughtfully, with an English groom's objection to a hunter being ridden off the

turf, "I don't know — but nothin' ever did seem to 'urt that 'ere particular 'oss, some'ow." he concluded, more cheerfully.

Early in the afternoon, Alston turned into the main street of F——. His horse was dark with sweat, but had apparently plenty of "go" left in him yet. The fire in his eye was unquenched, and his temper evidently still unsubdued.

The animal had, indeed, needed exercise. Attracted by his matchless power and symmetry, joined to an unimpeachable pedigree, Alston had purchased him in Ireland for a song, after nearly coming to grief in trying him, his extreme viciousness rendering him almost worthless. With infinite trouble, and some risk, he had succeeded in establishing a sort of armed neutrality between them for the most part, and, when the horse chose to go straight, he had the satisfaction of being the best mounted man in

every field with which he rode. When he didn't so choose, it was quite another affair.

Perhaps Alston had never had more difficulty in keeping his seat and his temper than on this occasion. The animal seemed possessed of the devil, and had done about everything but get down and roll over him. His master wondered if it were not possible for a horse to be insane, as, straining his powerful neck and gripping the bit hard, with swelling muscles and every nerve tense, the wicked beast curveted and plunged down the street, aroused to renewed efforts by the sights and sounds of the village. Dusty and tired, and with his temper at last little better than that of his horse, Alston pulled him hard around to enter the stable-yard of the tavern. A group of men loitering on the sidewalk jumped aside, as the great horse swerved violently from some object in the narrow

passage-way, and Alston heard one of them say, loudly: "That's like your kind — to ride over us! If we had horses we'd ride over you!"

In Alston's state of mind at the moment, these words acted like oil on a smouldering fire. Straightening his horse with a strong wrench, he threw both feet from the stirrups and sprang from the saddle with his hand on the pommel. Alighting on the sidewalk, he turned and confronted the man who had spoken, with an angry stare.

"Well, sir," he said, savagely, "you can *have* a horse; take this one! Upon my word of honor, if you'll ride him across the street, you can have him for nothing and welcome. Come — get on, man!" he added, pointing to the saddle, as the man looked wonderingly at him. "Get on, and ride over whom ever you please."

The others stared, then laughed. "Mount

him, Jake!" they cried, "go ahead! The gentleman will keep his word."

The man, a good-looking young fellow of about Alston's height and build, gave him a surly glance and looked at the horse, that stood for the moment quiet before him, with heaving flanks. He made a step forward, as if to mount, when he caught the animal's eye rolling viciously in its socket, and heard Alston's quick cry of "look out there!" and he leaped backward just in time to escape a sudden stroke of the horse's forefoot. It was fortunate for him that Alston, keeping one eye constantly on the dangerous animal, whose every movement he understood, had, as he warned him, jerked the rein violently and destroyed the horses' balance, lessening the reach and precision of the blow, else it might not have been avoided.

"You want me killed, I guess," mut-

tered the man, as he moved further away.

"Well," said Alston, now quite mollified; "you give him up, do you? Perhaps you see, my friend," giving another pull on the rein, as the horse seemed to meditate further mischief, "that I was not myself much to blame for so nearly riding you down. My name is Alston," he went on with a nod to the men, "and you all ought to know by this time that I am not one to impose on any man."

"That's so — I've heard of you, Mr. Alston," said one of the men heartily, as Alston turned away and led his horse carefully to the stable, where, with his own assistance, the pernicious beast was put up, and, in the littered seclusion of his stall, had time to reflect upon his sinful nature, and the extra fatigue it had entailed upon him.

Alston, who never missed an opportunity

of talking with the strikers, and knowing these men to be of their number, went back to the street, where they still remained, talking and chaffing the would-be horseman among their number. He had good-naturedly laughed with them, and Alston found them all rather jolly and disposed to meet his friendly advances in the same spirit.

"Come in a minute," he said, in his direct way, "and let's talk over the strike a little."

The men hesitated, and one said that he saw no good in talking of that. He had seen enough of it as it was.

"Oh, yes," replied Alston; "there is good in it. I never have met you before, and I want to get your views. Come in, come in."

The men looked at each other, and then in his pleasant face, and came up the steps. There was quite a party of them, for the

little colloquy by the passage-way had drawn others around. The curiosity of idle men is alive to the slightest incident, and a crowd forms readily when a strike is in force.

Alston was glad to see that the bar was closed, but sent for some good cigars that seemed to be appreciated.

"What do you wish to say to us, Mr. Alston?" said one of the men, standing near him.

"I've plenty to say to you," said Alston, with a smile. "But I should prefer to hear what you had to say first. Come now, Mr. Hines," he said, to an older man, a little further off, "you are one of the finance committee, they tell me. How are you getting along with this strike? Has it not gone far enough?"

"Well, sir," answered Hines, "I cannot tell you anything got from my official position in the order."

"No — certainly not," said Alston. "I beg your pardon — that would not be right. But as a private individual," he continued, "don't you think it is quite time for us to make up matters?"

Hines was a thoughtful-looking, middle-aged man. He did not now look at his companions, but straight at Alston, and, after a pause, said, with some emphasis, —

"Things ain't been run just right, and it isn't the first time I've thought so. And," he added, turning a little toward the others, "you may all make the most of what I say. But," he went on, "I'm not sure that because this strike's been managed bad, we ought to break up. If the 'Associates' don't stand together we shall be a failure; and that I'd hate to see."

"Yes," replied Alston; "that's all right. Stick together so long as you're in the right, but do it to help yourselves, not to injure

somebody else. How can you expect to succeed if you are unjust?"

"That is what Darragh says," returned Hines, "and I believe it's right. But we oughtn't to go to pieces because we've made one mistake."

"No," said Alston, "but you will go to pieces — you'll go to eternal smash all around, I tell you, if you don't repair your mistakes when you see them as plainly as you do now."

The other men did not say anything, but listened intently.

"Now just understand this," Alston went on, after waiting a moment for some one to speak, "I'm not urging you to come back for my own benefit, but wholly for your own."

"Why!" said another man, "don't it hurt the mill to have us on strike?"

"Yes, it does," replied Alston, quickly.

"But if we should try we could escape that by filling it in a week with other help. But we have made no effort to get them; just taken the few that have applied of themselves."

"Why haven't you done it, sir?" persisted the man.

"Why?" said Alston. "Because the superintendent and myself want to keep the old help if we can. Confound it, men! can't you see that we haven't wanted to fill your places if we could avoid it, in spite of what I am bound to call your infernal folly."

As Alston said these words, no man there doubted him, or resented his vigorous language. Honesty of purpose and strong sympathy for them were in every line of his face. It was evident that they were moved, and a look of pained indecision came over their faces.

"Just make a break of it," continued Alston; "do your duty to yourselves and your families. If your organization is good for anything, it will stand the lesson of such action, and be benefited by it."

At this moment Darragh entered the room. He looked about him in some surprise.

"Here, Mr. Darragh," called out Alston, as he perceived him; "our friends here have been polite enough to listen to a little of your doctrine from me. Perhaps I have set their minds at rest on one point; but, for the rest of it, you are an abler advocate than I."

"I must go now," he added, looking at his watch. As he bade them good-bye, his hand itched to do something directly to relieve their necessities. But he feared that open pecuniary assistance might be misunderstood, and offend their pride, and he

considerately restrained the impulse and went away.

Two hours later he entered the mill office, and, asking for Mr. Malcolm, was told that he was in the factory, talking with a lot of the old hands who were proposing to go to work.

"How many of them are there?" asked Alston. The clerk understood they would represent several hundred.

"They are the first of the 'Associates,'" he added, "who have come in, with the exception of a few stragglers."

"Well," said Alston, "thank goodness that a little sense is coming to some of them — Hullo, Malcolm," he added to the superintendent, who just entered; "they seem to be breaking up, do they?"

"Yes," replied Malcolm; "many of them have been getting rather despondent. Outside aid comes in slowly, and, as we all

know, there is a great deal of suffering. Something you and Darragh said to a number of them down street seems to have struck them at just the right moment — for they must have known it all before, — and they say they'll leave the order, come back, and bring a lot with them. If they stick, it is my impression we shall have seen the end of the trouble, for the whole are likely to rush in when they find there are enough to protect them. But you can't tell," he added; "I've seen many strikes. Indeed, I have been in them in my time, though, I believe, always with a fair grievance. I know how things work with strikers. These have agreed to come in the morning; but we may not see one of them."

CHAPTER VI.

MR. HARDY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the obvious fact that few among the mill operatives attended upon Mr. Hardy's stated ministrations, he was not unknown to many of them. When, long subsequent to his settlement over the parish in F——, this great factory had been erected and over three thousand people added to the population of the town, he had recognized the fact that, while many of them attended the Roman Catholic services that had been soon established, yet there were many who did not, and cared for no religious services. Without the expectation of drawing any to his congregation, he, in his abundant charity,

believed it his duty to do what he could for them, whenever and wherever he could.

If men would not hear him preach, they at least found that he bore them no ill will for it, and was equally to be relied upon in their times of sickness and distress. So it came about that he was often among them, and, though his stiff, old-fashioned speech and manner afforded them more or less amusement, they had a real liking and esteem for the kind-hearted minister.

Avoiding any special discussion with them of the merits of their strike, he had, since it began, been unremitting in his attention to the sick and needy, and earnestly stimulated the charitable societies of his church to active efforts among all, of whatever nationality or belief. Quite indifferent to the value of money when his sympathies were aroused, he gave away all he had, which, indeed, was little enough,

and showed not the slightest false delicacy in accepting everything obtainable, from any source, for this object; while the greatest part of his time was spent in the dispensation of general aid and comfort.

He preached charity to that extent that some of the more advanced theologians among his own people were fairly famishing for one of his old doctrinal sermons; and one deacon, of particularly rigid views, was heard to say that the parson ought to remember that charity began at home, and that the souls of the brethren needed food as well as the bodies of the unbelievers.

Mr. Hardy stepped into a grocery, dry goods, and hardware store on Main Street, one morning, and requested the proprietor to send around a few indispensables to a house where he had just found a sick man in need.

"Where is it you say he lives, Mr.

Hardy?" asked that worthy, who, in his shirt-sleeves, was sitting on his counter, and surveying the world through the store door, with a rather jaundiced eye.

"It is the last house but one in Mill Alley, on the right, Mr. Jones, and the man's name is John O'Flaherty. He will be easily found."

"Oh, yes! he's a striker," said the merchant. "It's of no use, Mr. Hardy; they wouldn't take the things if I sent them. They're afraid to, for I am boycotted, you know."

"Ah — yes — yes — so you are — too bad, too bad," said the minister. "Well," he continued, "you can do them up, and I will presently deliver them myself."

"How is the world using you generally, my friend?" asked Mr. Hardy, as the merchant proceeded to tie up the parcels.

"Only so so, parson. What with the

poor trade of summer and this blessed strike, things ain't going so well with me as they might."

"So I feared — so I feared," said Mr. Hardy, sympathetically. "But matters are not so bad with us as with these poor people, you know."

"I don't know that, sir," said the other; "I'm not sure but I'll have to stop soon. And I have a family to support, too, and not a cent saved."

"You do not mean that, I trust, my good sir?" said the minister. "I should be indeed grieved that you should meet with misfortune. You have been an honest man who gives just weight, and such should not be suffered to come to want."

"Well, Mr. Hardy, it's just here, you see. I've always been good to these mill folks, and trusted them, and everything like that, and I've lost a good deal that way, first

and last. I was in debt pretty bad; and now they up and boycott me, because I sold to the superintendent and to the folks they call 'scabs.' And, while their trade ain't much now, it was a good deal I lost at first; and I may have to go under directly."

The minister looked grave. "This boycott is a very objectionable thing, Mr. Jones. I can, indeed, find no justification for it."

"Yes," continued the man, with increasing warmth, as he reviewed his misfortunes; "they ordered me to sell no more to them people, and I told them to go to hell. Excuse me, Mr. Hardy,—but I'm an American citizen, and no man shall dictate to me."

"I sincerely regret," said the minister, seriously, "that you should have given way to profanity, my good friend. But," he added, looking at the counter reflectively,

— "so you are, certainly, an American citizen — very true — very true."

"Mr. Hardy," the store-keeper went on, "there are other people who have hard times as well as those who call themselves laboring men; and others who work just as hard as they, for precious little more profit, and have a darned sight more to worry them besides."

The minister considered a moment. "I am persuaded," he at length said, "that you are right there, Mr. Jones, — quite right. I work hard myself, very hard sometimes, and for but a moderate stipend — hardly adequate, sometimes, to meet the calls upon it," continued Mr. Hardy, thinking of his meagre salary, so hard to collect. "I think you but express a great truth in what you say," he added, decisively.

"Now," continued Mr. Jones, earnestly, "here they are — staying on strike, as every-

body knows, for nothing at all, and drinking and boycotting round, and starving themselves and everybody else. I think this 'Associates of Toil' business is the meanest, wickedest thing going!" Mr. Jones had finished tying up the parcels for some time, and he was now pacing back and forth within the circumscribed limits of his counter, like a panther in its cage, and his face was red and excited.

Mr. Hardy was leaning against a barrel, with his umbrella under his arm, when, at this moment, glancing through the store to the street, he caught sight of John Vance, with two or three others, passing on the opposite side of the way. He had known Vance for some time, had often seen him at his church with his wife, and took a good deal of interest in the bright, manly young machinist. He hastily gathered his bundles from the counter, took a firmer grip

with his arm upon the umbrella, and saying, hastily, "I beg you to excuse me, my dear sir," hurried out of the store and across the street.

"Mr. Vance," he said, as he overtook the men, "can I speak with you a moment?" Early in the day as it was, it was evident, from his face and manner, that Vance had been drinking, but he stopped at once as the clergyman addressed him. The men with him also stopped and stood by him.

"Go ahead there!" said Vance to them, roughly; "you're not wanted." And, with a stare at Mr. Hardy, they went on.

"My dear Mr. Vance," said the minister, taking no notice of his condition, and offering his hand, "I wanted to see you, so you will excuse my stopping you. Will you not walk on with me a little way?" he added.

Vance, suppressing as far as possible any

signs of his potations, nodded assent, and, looking a little askance at Mr. Hardy, walked slowly by his side.

"I fear things are going a little wrong with you, my dear sir," said the minister, after they had gone a few steps. "I feel a great interest in you," he continued, "and in your family, and would like to help you, if I could."

"I know of nothing you can do, Mr. Hardy," said Vance, rather sullenly.

"Perhaps not — perhaps not," said the minister, "but I should like to be of use, if I could. Would you mind," he added, after a pause, "my saying that perhaps you are not taking very good care of yourself just now? It worries your wife a good deal, you know."

"Mr. Hardy," said Vance, stopping short, "I know that. But what would you do, if you wanted to work and couldn't, and saw

everything going to the devil? I oughtn't to go on as I'm doing; but I might as well be drunk as lying on my back doing nothing, for all the good I am to any one."

"No, no!" said Mr. Hardy, earnestly. "You are very wrong there. A man gains nothing by giving up his self-respect and making his family unhappy."

The minister laid his hand on the other's arm as he spoke, and looked kindly in his face through his glasses.

"I'm not going to criticise you and the others for staying on strike — that you must judge of for yourselves. But, if it involves some hardship for your families, I do know that you have no right to add to it by giving way to — to —" the minister hesitated, "well, this sort of thing, you know," he finally said.

Vance stood still, looking soberly on the ground. He knew Mr. Hardy well, and felt

no resentment at his words, whose truth he fully admitted to himself.

"Come up to my house this afternoon, Mr. Vance," continued the minister, kindly, "and borrow some of my books. They say you have a fine talent as a machinist, and I have some works on that subject that will interest you; and you have now leisure in which to read them. We will help to keep your pot boiling, meanwhile.

"Thank you, Mr. Hardy," said Vance, gratefully; "I will come and get them. You are a good man, sir, and I thank you for saying what you have to me," he added, as Mr. Hardy, content with the effect of his words, shook him heartily by the hand and bade him good-bye.

Vance stood where the minister left him, and thoughtfully watched his quaint, faded black figure, with its slight stoop, going down the street. He saw him accosted by

the Catholic priest, a few doors away, who walked on with him, talking earnestly, and he knew that the two good men were concerting as to how the want and suffering about them could be best alleviated. He thought of these idle weeks and groaned, as often before, at the utter hopelessness of the prospect ahead. Then Mr. Hardy's words again came to him, and he thought of the wretched use he had made of his idleness. The sad face of his wife, so often now turning from him to hide its tears, came before him, and those of his little children, that looked into his own with such unconsciousness of evil and confidence in his goodness; and with almost a sob he turned and walked slowly homeward.

CHAPTER VII.

FATE OF THE REACTION.

THE superintendent's doubt expressed to Alston, as to the adherence of the men to their resolution of returning, was well founded. It quickly got about among the strikers that afternoon that a number had promised to go to work in the morning, and the leaders, the executive committee and their following, saw that unless they acted with energy there would result a general stampede of the main body, the strike would be practically over, and their power and influence ended. A meeting of the "Associates of Toil" was immediately called for that evening, and they used every effort of persuasion, and almost threats, to

secure its being well attended, urging that important business was to be transacted.

Darragh was away from the town, and these men had entire control of affairs.

When the hour arrived the hall was packed. There was considerable suppressed excitement among the members, and loud talk was heard here and there.

The committee-man Bradford addressed the meeting. He said that there was a rumor that some of the members proposed to go back to work on the next day. The names of several had even been repeated to him; but he didn't believe it. He couldn't think that any would be traitors to the noble order to which they had pledged themselves, and go back on their brothers in this way. He hoped there wasn't any truth in the report. He didn't believe there was a man in the hall who would do such a thing. He paused and looked over the

audience and into the faces of many men, whom he perfectly well knew wanted nothing else half so much as to do just this thing if they dared. He concluded by saying that, though he believed nothing of it himself, if any brother *did* know of such a matter, he had better get up and state the facts.

To this invitation no one, at first, responded, but, after an interval of suspense, a man jumped upon the platform.

"I know," he said, "that Lane, McDonald, Jake McCarty, Brooks, and a lot more that I can name, went to the mill and talked with old Malcolm to-day. That I know. Perhaps," he added, "they'll be knowing best themselves what they had to say to him. That's all."

A low murmur arose from different parts of the crowd. One of the men named stood in the middle of the room. "Speak

up, Lane!" shouted a man, pointing to him. "Tell us what you had to say in the mill."

Lane looked at his interlocutor and caught the cruel glitter in his eye, and then glanced here and there among the others. He was cowed. Feeling sure that more than half the men present sympathized with what he had done, he dared not avow it. From no one did he meet a look of encouragement, and there was nothing left him but denial. So he put on a blustering air and exclaimed: —

"I done nothing that I'm to be took to task for. We only went in to ask when they was going to send off them scabs."

Every man in the hall heard him, and all knew that he lied. But the leaders were satisfied. Their object was attained; for the doubtful had not dared to speak, and it was plainly demonstrated that, at present, at least, no man could stand up and defy

the decrees of the order. They contented themselves with gently admonishing the brethren generally, and Brother Lane and his party in particular, to the effect that such zeal was a little misplaced and that communication with the oppressor could be best had through the constituted authorities of the order.

Everything now went very smoothly. Other speeches were made, exhorting the "Associates" to stand firm, and assuring them that the other side would surely back down. Many weeks had passed, it was true, but the mill could not hold out forever; that more assistance had been voted them, and would soon be received.

An eloquent visiting brother, high in the confidence of the order, was introduced, and made an exceedingly neat address. He was glad to be with them, he said, and to congratulate them on their noble and

long-sustained contest for the permanence and welfare of the order. This was no sordid fight for a few dollars more or less. Not at all! They stood in F—— for a great, undying principle, and they would win in the fight, — it was a mere matter of time; the God of battles would sustain them and give them the victory. He depicted in glowing periods the might and growth of the order throughout this great land, and closed with a stirring peroration, in which that soulless entity, Capital, was pictured as cowering helpless before the serried cohorts of triumphant Labor.

Some of the audience could not quite see the use of it all, or trace the exact connection of things, but it certainly was very fine; and when a personal admirer of the brilliant orator, who had received his cue, moved that the finance committee be authorized to pay twenty-five dollars

from the funds in their hands towards defraying the brother's travelling expenses, it was voted at once, in spite of the starving families who needed the money.

The anarchist Kohler finally climbed upon the platform and, with a greasy smile, went on with some of his characteristic drivel, that, to do the audience justice, proved sufficiently offensive to start a movement for the door.

This meeting ended the break among the strikers for the time. Those who had not been present heard of the proceedings, and all were intimidated. No "Associates of Toil" appeared at the mill on the following morning.

Mr. Malcolm, whose patience was about exhausted, wrote a line to Alston in which he suggested that they had now borne with the senseless obstinacy of these people long enough, and it was high time that energetic

steps be taken to secure help and work the mill to its full capacity, in the interest of the stockholders. Alston, on receiving this note, was seriously perplexed. He felt that Mr. Malcolm was, in a sense, right, and yet he had hoped so long that the operatives would return, and take the wages they so sorely needed, that he could not bear to see that done that would absolutely shut them out.

He stood, with Mr. Malcolm's letter in his hand, leaning against the mantel-piece, and looking down at his wife with such a sombre face that she asked, quickly: —

"Why, Ned, dear, what is it that troubles you so?"

"Ada," he replied, "I never was so bothered before in my life!"

"It's about things in F——, I suppose," she said.

"Yes, I had hoped they were beginning

to settle themselves, as I told you; but Malcolm writes that the movement to return was nipped, and there the thing is,— going on as badly as ever. Malcolm now insists that we have no right to hold things open for the strikers any longer, in justice to the stockholders. I am willing to wait much longer, as far as *our* interests go, and you know they are large."

"Yes," she said; "we both have a good many shares. But we neither of us care, if there's a chance of the people coming back."

"That's what we want, darling, of course," returned her husband, "but there are a good many stockholders who mightn't feel as we do about this, and some, perhaps, who can't afford to. I am really afraid that I may not be properly balancing my now rather conflicting duties, — to the stockholders, on one side, and

these operatives, on the other. Regarded strictly as a *duty*, the latter is getting rather shadowy, to say the least. Malcolm has felt for some time that he ought to make more effort to get outside help, but I have over-persuaded him, — told him they would be back directly, and all that, — so he has continued to take only those that offered, as from the beginning, he was of course, bound to do. Now he insists, and, I confess, I am in great doubt."

"Ned," said his wife, "do not desert the cause of these poor, mistaken people quite yet. Think," she added, gently, "of the long, hard winter before them. Surely they must see their error very soon. After all your interest in them, wait yet a little longer. Think of their poor little children, Ned."

As the young wife said this, she arose, in her earnestness, and passed her hand

through her husband's arm, looking up into his face with pleading, beautiful eyes. Alston gave her a loving look, and stroked the little hand resting on his arm; but he did not speak.

"Ned," continued his wife, "if you cannot decide, or if you think that Mr. Malcolm is not inclined to do as we wish, why do you not go over and talk with Mr. Phillips?"

Alston's face brightened. "That is a good idea; I should be willing to trust my judgment, if he stood by it."

"Yes, Ned," said his wife, gravely, "I think he is a man of most excellent judgment."

"Why, dear, how can you judge? you have only met him once or twice."

"Well, he has impressed me *very*, very favorably," she insisted, with an air of profound conviction; "and I am not often

deceived in people — see how quickly and justly he estimated *you*, Ned," she added, looking thoughtfully in the fire.

Alston turned his head a little to hide a smile. "I will go round to the club," he said, "and see if I can get his estimate of *this* question. I rather agree with you about Mr. Phillips," he added, "though possibly on different grounds."

The president was just finishing a third rubber when Alston looked in at the club. They went into another room, and he listened to Alston's statement of the position of matters and his doubts as to the present duty of the company, with his customary patient and rather bored manner.

"Been going on now nearly six weeks," he remarked, parenthetically, when Alston was quite through.

"Yes," answered Alston.

"Should hardly say," continued Mr.

Phillips, after a long pause, during which he scratched his cheek reflectively, that a week or two longer could ruin us. If you hurry too much it might ruin a good many of them."

"That's it exactly," replied Alston; "that is just what I feel."

"*Wouldn't* hurry, then," said the president. "They'll come back presently; sick of their nonsense now, no doubt, but takes time to screw up their courage." Mr. Phillips looked through the door-way toward the whist-table, and begged to know if Mrs. Alston were quite well.

"If Malcolm is a little rusty," Alston asked, as they parted, "or Hartwell comes bothering round, — he's been rather fussy lately, by the way, about the slow way the mill is filling up, — I may use your name in support of my views, may I not?"

"To any extent," replied the president.

"I told you, Ned, that it was quite impossible for me to be deceived in a person whom I had once seen," remarked Mrs. Alston, decisively, when her husband had described his interview with Mr. Phillips.

CHAPTER VIII.

AMONG THE PEOPLE.

THE wife of John Vance had been much alone during the weeks of the strike. Though without occupation, her husband had been rarely at home except at meal times, and not always then. The fatal habit of drink had been fastening itself upon him, and he had at length become apparently quite indifferent to the fate of his family or himself. His wages were soon gone and their other means had been for some time exhausted.

When he came home after meeting Mr. Hardy, his wife noticed that he seemed quite sober, and his face looked grave and sad. He threw himself into a chair and leaned his head upon his hand.

"Well, John, what is the prospect?" said his wife, pleasantly.

"There is no prospect," he said, dully. "The mill is gradually filling up with outsiders, though slowly, and, unless these roughs scare them off, we shall ourselves have to go away and get work elsewhere."

"Why don't you let the 'Associates' go," said his wife, "and go back to your place in the shop? You can't get another such good place, and why will you lose it for the orders of Patrick Murphy?"

"I don't dare to do it — that's the plain truth about it, Mary. I've tried it once and dropped it. You don't know the tyranny of this thing. I and a great many others — the most of us, I believe — wanted to do as Darragh said. You know how it was; we'd been working along with those non-union men before, and we didn't see why

we couldn't again. But Murphy and Bradford, and their set, crowded into the meeting, and huggermuggered and frightened the vote through, and that settled it. You know all about it. The roughs all hang together, and the good men don't know whom to trust, and dare not speak out; we tried the other day, but gave it up. I wish to God," he added, gloomily, "the 'Associates of Toil' had never been got up. It'll be the ruin of us all, yet."

"Why," asked his wife, "do these kind of men get so much power in the order? Why do you make them the committee?"

"Well, I don't know, exactly; but, somehow, the bummers always seem to figure to get the control in these things. The quiet men, the good workmen, never seem to have the time to get elected to office. And when these men get in, they manage to hold on. It's something like politics,

where about the same thing happens, I should think."

"You'd be treated as a scab, John, if you should go to work, I suppose?"

"Yes, and worse. I should have to leave here if I want to get to work again. If I could get a little money to move us, I would cut the whole concern, give up my trade, and try and hire a little farm somewhere. I used to think that the 'Associates of Toil' was a big thing; but now, I only want to get out of its reach as far as I can!"

As he spoke, his wife came to him and put her hand on his shoulder. "John," she said, "I always wished that you would come and live in my place. Let's go down to N——, to father's farm. It's a good time now, and he'll be glad to send us a little money to bring us, and have you help him. Then you can see what you want to

do up there. You can work a little farm on the mountain, or leave us with father and log it this winter, and decide later. Now *do*, John. Let me write father to-day. I always disliked this life, and I hate it worse than ever now."

He thought a moment or two, with his eyes fixed on the floor.

"Well, write!" he said, at last. "We can try it. I'm tired of this thing, anyhow. I want to be my own man again. You write, Mary, and I'll post the letter to-day."

"I will," his wife said, joyfully; "right off now." And, clearing the table, she, after much trouble to find writing materials, seated herself to the task.

Her husband seemed to think it occupied much time, for he smoked a pipe out and walked about the room with the nervous impatience of one who has but lately been

drinking hard and begins to feel the physical reaction.

"You must be writing a long one, Mary," he at last said, stopping in front of her.

"Well, it's done, at last," she answered; and, folding and directing the letter, she gave it to him. "Now," she continued, "we shall have an answer within a week, and then we'll go. I'll be all ready to start. Stay of the same mind, whatever happens; won't you, John? And John, —" she hesitated a little, "dear John, don't keep on drinking. You don't know how unhappy that's made me, with the strike and all; — and now, our deciding this makes me happier to-night than I've been since we were married. Just think how the children will like the country. And we'll all be happier and better off." She reached up and kissed him, with a tear in her eye. He bent down and returned her kiss, then

straightened his tall figure, and a look of resolution came into his handsome face.

"I have been a brute, Mary," he said; "but, after the first day or two of the strike, I saw how things were going, and drank hard because I felt bad about it: — and I didn't want to say anything to you about things because I was angry and ashamed of the whole business." His wife pressed his arm sympathetically.

"I know, John," she said — "I understood how you felt; but it wasn't quite the way to help things, you know."

"No, Mary, it wasn't, and I knew it. Mr. Hardy came along and spoke to me this morning, and it sent me home almost crying, Mary. My mind is made up — you've decided on the right thing. And if the strike ended to-morrow, we'll stick to this plan just the same."

"I must have a nipper or two this morn-

ing," he continued, "for see how my hand trembles; but I'll come home all right, never fear. After to-day, not a drop. To-morrow we'll get ready to pull up and go."

Mary Vance looked a little anxious, but concealed it, like a sensible little woman; for she knew her husband's easy-going nature contained an element of strong resolution that asserted itself at times, and she believed it had now possessed him. So she let him go with a smiling injunction to be home punctually to dinner — "though it isn't much we have," she said, with another smile; her happiness at the future now opening again so brightly, making her careless of the present hardships of their situation.

As her husband went down the stairs, she went quickly to the other room, where the children were playing, and, stooping, seized them both in her arms with an energy that

rather startled them; murmuring, as she kissed them again and again, "Papa will pretty soon take you away to such a nice place, darlings; and we'll be so much happier, all of us."

In an upstairs tenement of a large old wooden house on one of the narrowest and most thickly inhabited streets in F—— a woman was lying ill.

The house was full of people; families occupying two or three rooms, and the hallways being used in common.

The two rooms in one of which was the sick woman were uncarpeted and but scantily furnished; the room in which she laid containing little else than the bed and a chair or two.

The sick woman was alone. Her face was flushed with fever, and she tossed from side to side, moaning feebly at intervals.

On a stand by the bed was water and a vial of medicine.

The room would have been utterly forlorn and gloomy but for the rays of the sun that, shining brightly over the fields and woods outside of the village, did not refuse their kindly radiance within it, and shone pleasantly through the uncurtained window and across the foot of the bed.

"Will they never come?" murmured the woman, as her restlessness increased, and her thin hand, thrown from the covering, picked nervously at the blanket. "Will they never come?" she repeated.

At this moment a little girl came in from the outer room. An old shawl held about her head fell over and partly concealed her shabby dress, while her poor little bare feet showed in places through her worn shoes.

"Is that you, Annie?" asked the woman, faintly.

The child came to the bedside.

"Yes," she answered. "An' the priest said he'd come directly to see you. Have some water, mammy?"

The woman shook her head, and the girl pulled off her shawl, and, drawing a chair near to the bed, seated herself, and watched her mother with the grave, steady look of a child.

"Where's the father, Annie, and Johnny?" asked her mother, after a while.

"They're out on the street somewheres," answered the child. "Will I go to find 'em?"

"No matter," said the woman; "what good would it do? — but why don't Father Shannon come?"

"Will I go down to the dure and watch for 'im?" asked the child again, with the same mechanical readiness to be of use, and still watching her mother with her quiet gaze.

"No," said the woman, striking her hand with feeble motion on the side of the bed.

"There's some one," said the girl, as a light knock sounded on the outer door. "Will I see who it is?"

"Yes — maybe it's the priest."

The child went out, and returned presently with one whom the sick woman regarded with a disappointed look.

"I hope you will excuse me for coming in," said Ellen Hardy, for it was she; "but they told me downstairs that some one was sick here, and your little girl has let me in. I want to do something for you if you will let me."

"Give the lady a chair, Annie," said the sick woman, with an instinctive courtesy that overcame her sense of suffering. "It's little you can do, ma'am, thanking you kindly," she went on, with a weak voice. "I'm fearful that I'm struck with death."

"I hope it is not as bad as that," said Ellen, gently. "When was the doctor here, Annie?" she asked the little girl, who stood looking in her face with frank admiration.

"Not since yisterday morning, ma'am," answered the child. "We'd no money to pay," she added, dryly, with that entire comprehension of the family trials common in children so situated, "and maybe he'll not come again."

"Oh, yes," said Ellen. "He is a good man, and will not forget you."

She bent over the woman, who was now more quiet, and, with the little girl's assistance, adjusted the pillows more comfortably; and, wetting a linen cloth, laid it upon the sick woman's forehead.

While she was busy taking some things from her basket, and questioning the child as to what her mother needed, she became aware of the presence of another person, and,

looking up, saw that Father Shannon stood in the door-way.

He was a clear-eyed, benevolent-looking man, with the usual smoothly shaven face of his profession.

"I knocked, but no one heard," he said, politely, "so I ventured to enter unannounced. I hope I do not intrude, Miss Hardy?"

"No, sir," she replied, rising; "I am the intruder, if it be any one. I think you will be very welcome to our poor friend here."

The clergyman bowed and approached the bedside.

"Good-morning, my daughter," he said, taking the sick woman's hand. "You sent for me. Are you very ill?"

Ellen took the little girl's hand, and they went into the next room, where she gave her some directions as to her mother's care, and, leaving her a little money, she promised

to come on the following day. "You are a very *little* nurse, to be sure, but you must do the best you can," she said, cheerily, as she went away.

On the steps of the house were several men, smoking and talking, who respectfully made way for her. The narrow street, lined with tenement houses, was alive with people. The men sat in the door-ways or leaned from the open windows in their shirt-sleeves, though the November air was keen, while those women not busy indoors stood about gossiping in low voices, unlike their ordinary hearty clamor. All were idle, and looked unhappy and discontented. Signs of want were everywhere visible, and not a few adult faces looked pinched and hungry.

Sadder than all else was the unusual quiet of the children that were about in the streets and yards, and Ellen's heart ached

that these little irresponsible beings should suffer from no fault of their own. That, by the law of natural authority, they might have to endure hunger, nay, even die of want, because the parent so willed it, without being able to understand the reason why, or having the power to help themselves.

Many knew Ellen as she passed, and saluted her with grateful and affectionate emphasis. With some she stopped and spoke, and entered several other houses to relieve particular distress of which she knew.

In this and other similar localities, she had for many weeks spent the greater part of her time, believing that she could herself best and least offensively dispense the aid at her command.

Her father, who was familiar with these people of old, could not often accompany her, their joint labors requiring effort in different directions to cover the ground.

As Ellen reached the end of the little street, on her way elsewhere, the familiar carriage of the village doctor went by on the main street. As the doctor bowed, Ellen motioned to him, and he drew his sulky to the sidewalk, and looked down on her with his shrewd, weather-beaten face, seamed with the wrinkles of years of night work, and brown with constant exposure to the elements.

"I hope you don't need my professional services, Ellen?" he said, with the kindly familiarity of one who had officiated at her birth and had known her ever since. "But you don't look it, exactly," he continued; "your missionary work seems to agree with you."

"No, doctor," said Ellen; "but a poor woman, in the last house on the left, whom I just saw, is very sick, and they seemed to fear you were not coming again."

"That's just their ingratitude!" said the doctor, sharply. "I told them I should be in again to-day, and I sent that woman her medicine, and paid for it myself! I am very much driven, and have to get around to them as I can."

"I knew, of course," said Ellen, "that you never deserted a patient. But don't blame the woman. *She* said nothing."

"Oh, I'm used to them," said the doctor, easily, and with no trace of his momentary irritation; "I've learned not to mind it. Some of these folks are so suspicious that they cannot seem to understand that any one can act disinterestedly. I'll see our friend in an hour or two. Her case is not urgent."

"Thanks, doctor," said Ellen; "I knew that it was all right with you."

"Well, Ellen," said the doctor, gathering up the reins, "I'm just driven to death.

There's a great deal of sickness among these people, as you know, arising largely from insufficient nutrition, and I am sadly overworked."

The doctor chirped to his horse, then drew him up and leaned over towards Ellen with a grim smile. "I wish," he said, "these fellows would boycott me. That's what I want. If they don't do it, I may have to go on strike myself, to save my life. Good-bye." And, loosening his rein, he went rattling down the street.

Father Shannon, sitting by the bedside of the sick woman, talked with her in his gentle, encouraging voice.

"Father," said the woman, "I'm very sick; I want the offices of the church."

He looked in her face, and felt her pulse. He was so familiar with sickness, this good friar, that he had acquired no mean skill in judging of the condition of a patient.

"Not yet, I think, my daughter," he said, after a pause; "you are not as ill as you imagine. We will have you well again, with the help of the Blessed Virgin."

She was too weak to argue with him, but, from her hopeless look and the impatient motion of her hand on the bed-covering, it was evident that she did not believe him. She remained silent a moment.

"Come to-morrow again," she at last said; "I may need you then."

"I will come every day, my daughter, and, meanwhile, I must send you some comforts."

"Miss Hardy will take care of that," she answered; "they say she never leaves one when she's found they need her. Too much must not come to one place," she added, speaking with difficulty in her desire for the good of others. "There's terrible need all about, father; and there'll be more."

"Yes — I know it," said he, sadly. "The church," he added, "does not approve of this order that is making the trouble; and the displeasure of the Holy See weighs on my conscience for you all, even as I feel your bodily sufferings."

"Ah, father," said the sick woman, in a stronger voice, that trembled with excitement, "I'd not like to say it to my man, but this 'Associates' is like to do us all out. It's what's being the death of me; and the childer starvin', too. Can't you talk to the man, Father Shannon?" she added, with a hysterical sob.

"There, you must not excite yourself, my daughter. I have done what I could; but the order seems stronger than the church just now. I must not strain my influence too far with my people, in a matter not yet formally placed under the ban."

The clergyman rose. "I must go now," he said; "may God's blessing be upon you, my daughter. I will pray that he may soon restore you. You shall want for nothing, and I will see you to-morrow."

CHAPTER IX.

"FIAT JUSTITIA," ETC.

BRAYTON called one morning at the parsonage, just after breakfast, and told Ellen that he was coming presently to take her to the farm to spend the day with his mother.

"You must have a day off," he said. "You are spending so much time in this charitable work that it will begin to wear upon you, if you do not have a rest."

"Come," he insisted, as she demurred; "get some one to take charge of your patients, as the doctors do, and let me have my way."

"Where are you going now, George?" she asked.

"Just down to the police station a mo-

ment," he answered; "then I will drive you out and come back, as I wish to be present later at the trial of three or four scamps, who hustled a man at the depot yesterday."

"Well," she said, "if you will drop one or two things for me down street, I can perhaps manage to go,—for I would like to, George," she added, with a smile.

"All right," he replied; "I can do it. Are they ready now?"

"In a moment!" When she gave them to him, it was with such voluminous directions that he said he really wished she would send a boy along to do his thinking for him.

He succeeded fairly well, however, and was back in a few minutes; and his fast trotting mare took Ellen very quickly to the farm, which she reached with the color in her cheeks deepened and eyes brightened by the rapid motion through the frosty air.

When, a little later, Brayton reached the room where the trial justice held his court, he was obliged to elbow his way through a considerable crowd, composed mainly of striking mill operatives, some of whom scowled at him as he passed, — for the more turbulent among them were beginning to find that he was the mainspring of the strong police supervision of their movements, and the repeated arrest and punishment of those caught in mischief.

As he pushed forward, his strong shoulder impinged with considerable force against a softer but heavier body than his own, and a guttural German execration apprised him of the presence of the Anarchist, who looked around at him with a snarl.

"Ach — damnable Capitalist! Tyrant!" said the fellow. "Of yourself have a care!"

Brayton brought his hand down squarely

on the fat shoulder before him, and with a quiet but powerful twist turned his man completely around, and, pointing to the door, said: "Do you see that door? go out of it — or I'll have you in the lock-up in two minutes!"

The apostle of fire and blood looked at him, and shuffled out of the room.

Brayton spoke to the chief of his police, who was in the room. "It is high time," he said, "that fellow was out of town. Watch him with great care, and upon the least occasion lock him up. He is getting bold, and I shouldn't wonder if he was hatching some mischief."

"Well, sir," returned the officer, "he is a sly one. I've been watching him all along, but can't get hold of anything. I think, with you, that he and some others will be up to something before long."

The evidence against the men on trial

was conclusive, and the worthy justice, though rather a plain man and not very learned in the law, was not much obfuscated by the eloquent argument of the young lawyer who appeared for the prisoners, and who had the misfortune of having neither the law or the facts with him.

His appeals to the Bill of Rights, and waving of the stars and stripes, in startling metaphor, were unavailing, though highly appreciated by the crowd, and the prisoners were found guilty and the court-room cleared.

As Brayton was going down the steps, he was joined by Alston, who had come over from the mill to inquire into the cause of the gathering of people.

"You seem to have a good many of these affairs to look after," said he to Brayton, as they shook hands.

"Yes," answered Brayton, "the cowardly

cruelty of some of these men is inconceivable. If a man is a 'scab,' they seem to think it the duty of the 'Associates of Toil' to pound him, kick him in the face, and stamp on him, six or eight against one. It is a very bad organization, I think, Mr. Alston."

"I'm afraid it is," replied Alston.

"See," said Brayton, "those men over on the corner watching us. They belong to the gang that are the cause of the continuance of this trouble. I venture to say that not more than a hundred men are, in this town to-day, keeping more than two thousand people on the verge of starvation, through the machinery of this wretched order."

"Yes; it illustrates the danger of men rushing unthinkingly into such combinations," said Alston. "What is going to bring this great majority to their senses, —

emancipate them from their thraldom, and let them go to work, as they wish?"

"I don't know," replied Brayton. "It may come about in some very disagreeable way, I'm afraid. Do you know, Mr. Alston, that a dynamite cartridge was found under the wall of the south tenement last night! The fuse had gone out, or there might have been a hole made in the building."

"The superintendent told me of it this morning," said Alston. "What shall you do about it?"

"We have arranged to picket the place hereafter so carefully," said Brayton, "that a rat cannot get there, night or day, without being seen. Say nothing of it," he added, "as it is not well to alarm people too much."

Brayton was untying his mare from the post to which she was hitched.

"Will you take me," asked Alston, "as far as the top of the street with you."

"Certainly; get right in."

"That is a very pretty stepper," said Alston, admiring Brayton's horse.

"Yes," he answered, "she can easily beat 2:30, though she has not been on a track for some time. By the way," he went on, "I looked over that saddle-horse of yours, in the tavern stable, last week. I think I never saw better quarters or finer limbs on a horse of his size; he must be much over your weight, I should think. Can he jump?"

"Jump!" exclaimed Alston. "If he was feeling in the mood, I think he'd attempt the church over there. Nothing seems to daunt him. But he is hardly the animal I'd like to lend our old friend Mr. Hardy to take his exercise on. Ah!" he added, as he saw Father Shannon on the sidewalk,

"there's that excellent priest, and I want to see him a moment. Just drop me here, will you;—thanks!" He jumped from the carriage. "Good-morning."

"Good-morning," said Brayton, as he shook the reins and went swiftly homewards.

"Well, Father Shannon," said Alston, as the clergyman approached him, "your reverence is the second priest I've seen within the hour. The black-coats seem to be abroad this morning."

"We have much to keep us abroad these days, Mr. Alston."

"Yes," Alston went on; "I saw Mr. Hardy going down the street by the mill, a while ago, with a philanthropic glitter in his eye, evidently bent on doing good, in spite of the flesh and the devil; and here you are prowling around, with much the same benevolent expression. Upon my word,

Father Shannon, I am learning better than ever before what clergymen are good for! I have hitherto rather regarded them as drones in the hive — like myself, for example."

The priest smiled good-humoredly. "All the drones, then," he said, "seem to have been aroused, lately."

"How are the supplies holding out?" asked Alston. "Don't you want some more money? I can do little but aid you in that way; but I can't see these blockheads starve."

"You are very good, Mr. Alston — "

"Oh, bosh!" interrupted Alston. "I beg your pardon — but I cannot forget that, if it had not been for our niggardliness in the first place, this strike would not have taken place at all."

The sky had clouded, and it began to sprinkle. Alston begged the priest to open

his umbrella, and let him share the sacerdotal shelter, as he expressed it.

"You see," he continued, as they went together down the street, "I could hardly squeeze out quite as much money alone, but I get some help, out of my friends, on vague charitable pretexts. I am beginning to be regarded among them as rather a crank. Yesterday I actually wiggled a fifty out of old Hartwell."

"From your treasurer, Mr. Alston?"

"'The divil a less'—saving your reverence's presence. He is quite unaware of my absurdities here, and the destination of this money. I fear he would burst a blood-vessel, if he knew of it."

"Is it quite right," asked the clergyman, "that he should contribute in ignorance of the object?"

"Well, I must leave that to you church casuists to settle," said Alston, laughing.

"I have somewhere heard the maxim, '*Finis coronat opus*,' and should say it rather applied here."

"Come, Father Shannon," he added, holding out a fifty-dollar bill, "let this, in your hands, do as much good as possible, and do not leave me to bear my sin alone.

The clergyman took the money thoughtfully. "Perhaps the good God will not impute this to you as a sin," he said, reverently. "If it be one, I will have to share it with you, for the sake of the suffering it will relieve."

"Let me know when you need more," said Alston. "Don't be bashful. I don't know how much longer this thing is going to last, but I am in for it now. My money came to me easily, and it don't hurt me to lose some; nor my friends, either."

"Thank you," said the priest; "you have done much. What these people would

have done, indeed, without your aid, I cannot say. There is great suffering, as it is."

They had reached the mill gate, and Alston stopped. The clergyman looked at his companion with kindly eyes.

"The prayers of the church," he said, solemnly, "will go up for you, my friend, for your goodness to its people."

"Thanks," said Alston, embarrassed, and a little moved by the priest's earnestness, as he left him.

CHAPTER X.

THE SITUATION.

THE condition of affairs in F—— was now deplorable, and it seemed as if it were impossible that the strike could continue much longer.

The mill, as has been related, had remained open, and was worked as far as the limited number of operatives permitted. Such men as had applied for work, the superintendent felt obliged to receive. These were not "Associates of Toil," of course; but merely men who desired work, and assumed to engage in it without the permission of any "order," — who felt that they had the right to their own judgment as to the manner of supporting themselves and their families, and had never seen any good

reason for submitting themselves to the guidance of others in such matters. As American citizens, they properly considered that, so long as they obeyed the laws of the land, made for all, they ought to be protected in disregarding the rules and censorship of any coterie of men, who might, indeed, obey such rules themselves, if they chose, but had no right to impose them upon others. These workmen were under the protection of the police, but they were constantly menaced by the "Associates," and, in many instances besides those already alluded to, were maltreated, in spite of the vigilance of the authorities.

Men arriving in town, in search of work, had been met by so-called "pickets" of the order with threatening suggestions, euphemistically styled by them "moral suasion." Some had been frightened away at once, and others succumbed to "persuasion"

after a few days. But there were others, whose necessities or pluck rendered them proof against it, and who persisted in working in the mill, as they had intended. These were obliged to go to and from their work, with the others already under the same ban, more or less under police protection. Opprobrious epithets sounded constantly in their ears, and they learned to be almost indifferent to an occasional shower of stones.

Some account has been given of the treatment to which they were liable when incautiously venturing about the town alone in the evening. There had been many instances of this sort, in some of which the unoffending men had suffered severely. One man, nearly done to death, was languishing in the hospital of a neighboring city. On another occasion, however, when the "Associates" had supposed that three to

one was sufficient odds, they found themselves mistaken. Though attacked from behind, the non-union man, who possessed great muscular power and agility, promptly put them forth to the signal discomfiture of his antagonists. Two of them, indeed, were effectually prevented from further usefulness, in this particular line of persuasion, during the continuance of the strike. Many of the strikers honestly deprecated these things; but still they went on.

The boycott had not been confined to the store of Mr. Jones, but had been rigidly applied to all transacting business in F—— who failed to obey the directions of the "Associates of Toil" as to whom they should deal with. This included all but one —a provision dealer, whose shop was in the quarter of the town most occupied by these men. He yielded, rather than close up.

Some embarrassment arose with regard to the only drug store in the place, and it was found necessary to raise the boycott there, rather to the amusement of the apothecary.

Poor Mr. Jones, as he said, had at first suffered considerably by this oppressive interdict; but the entire business of the town was affected far less by the boycott than by the general stagnation of trade, and the loss of the purchasing power of so large a portion of the population.

In a village three-fourths of whose population was composed of persons connected with the operation of the B—— factory, this strike was a matter that affected the entire place, and engaged the attention of all living in the settled portion of the town. It effected a change in the whole current of affairs. Its painful results could not be hidden, and little else was thought or talked of. The charitable found the field for their

efforts in the relief of the necessitous so limitless that they, like some of our friends, gave themselves almost wholly to the work; while the town authorities found that, with this idle population, given to the excesses described, their vigilance needed to be constant and unremitting.

Perhaps the agricultural portion of the inhabitants of F——, living away from the centre, were the least affected by this condition of things. When, after making their purchases at some boycotted establishment, they lingered about the village, it was quite evident that they regarded the strike as a rather childish performance, with which a farming community could have but little sympathy, albeit they were laborers themselves of no mean pretensions. They talked over the present attitude of the strikers and the order of the "Associates of Toil," in a calm, judicial manner, on the

store piazza, though the subject was of much less apparent interest to them than the points of a yoke of steers, or the probable price of potatoes during the coming season; and they contemplated the idlers about the streets as though they were so many recalcitrant school-boys, who should, perhaps, be looked after a little, but to whose vagaries they, after all, attached but little importance.

The idea of a number of grown men voluntarily giving up the personal control of their own business, and then standing out, simply for the sake of augmenting the power and influence of an organization that seemed to them of about the same value as the Odd Fellows or Free Masons, met with their cold disapproval. Possessing natures capable of being warmed to fever heat by patriotic or other sufficient considerations, in the ordinary affairs of life they were im-

passive and logical, and were unable to see the least palliation for the self-inflicted suffering of those engaged in this strike.

It is rare for mill operatives to have any resource except their wages, and after the strikers had received the amounts due at the time of the strike, their main dependence was upon the contributions from elsewhere.

The general executive board of the order had from time to time voted them certain sums from the general treasury, in all a very considerable amount, and they had received from other local assemblies some large contributions.

These supplies at first seemed to them ample, unaccustomed as most of them were to considering large amounts of money, and not realizing that to sustain such a number of persons requires, in the aggregate, very great sums weekly. But they soon became more intelligent on this sub-

ject. The money came into the hands of a finance committee, who distributed it with great fairness and scrupulous honesty; but it was soon evident that it was wholly inadequate to more than slightly mitigate their growing distress.

At the last formal distribution this fact was painfully apparent. The majority of the applicants were women. Some had with them children, and it was pitiful to see the eager and wistful look of the little things as they watched the scanty pittance handed to their mothers, evidently fully comprehending that it was all that was to be had with which to buy them bread.

"Is this all that I'm to get from yez?" said an old woman, looking at the money lying in her hand.

"I am sorry," returned one of the committee, "but it is all we can give you, in fairness to the others —"

"Arrah, the divil fly away with yer 'Associates of Toil.' Didn't that thafe Pat Murphy till us that we'd be taken good care of by the ordher? Phwat good is this you've given me?"

"Better draw a little uv yer money from the bank, Mother O'Connell, or sell a house or two?" said a young man standing near by.

As the old woman was believed to have saved a good deal, and was known to own two tenement houses, working hard in the mill only to increase her hoard, this remark was greeted with laughter by the crowd.

"And is it me hard earnings ye'd have me spind?" responded the crone. "Bad cess to ye — and thin I'll not do it"; and, loudy muttering to herself, she pushed out through the crowd.

But there were few like her. A pale, middle-aged woman, with a child in her

arms, took the money handed to her, and, realizing its trifling amount, and what it must do for her family, she could not suppress the tears that rose to her eyes.

"Can we have no more for a week?" she said, looking piteously at the committee. "We cannot live upon this. My children are nearly starving now."

"We want to give you more, but it's all we've got," said the committee-man. — "By G—d! I can't stand this business," he said to his colleagues in an undertone, as the woman turned away. "You'll have to get some one in my place after this."

A youngish man, himself looking thin and hungry enough, had watched the women coming and going for some minutes — but when one of the committee asked him if he did not want to take his money, he shook his head.

"No," he said: "I can't do it. Give it

to the women and children. I have no family"; and he turned away.

Many others that afternoon followed his example and nobly refused to take their share, though the hunger that was even then gnawing them made severe test of their manhood. It was wonderful to see men at once so resolute and so weak. So strong in their capacity for self-sacrifice, and yet the willing victims of a meaningless combination, to which they clung with blind fatuity.

For several hours the dreary procession filed in and out. It seemed the veriest farce, this doling out of sums not half equal to the needs they were intended to relieve.

When the committee were left to themselves, they looked at each other with no very pleasant expressions.

"Where is this thing to end?" said the

man who had before spoken. "What's the prospect for more money, Hines?"

"Very bad indeed," said Hines, who was the same man who has been described in a former chapter. Though much shaken in his faith in the wisdom of the course pursued by the majority, and nearly persuaded by Alston and Darragh to head the return to work, his natural obstinacy and great reluctance to see the order injured, at the last held him back, and he had remained at his post on the finance committee.

"I have this letter," he continued, "from the general board, that I showed you. I don't see much encouragement in it; do you? There's too many strikes all about."

"Well, I'm resigning," said the other; "and I'm going to get out of this myself, — there's no lookout ahead. I'd go into the mill to-morrow, but I won't be called a scab."

"It seems to me," said Hines, "though they don't say it, as if the general executive board, master workman and all, thought we ought to have followed Darragh's advice. There is more money gone elsewhere than here, any way, — that I know."

"Well," said the other, who had been writing on a piece of paper, that he now threw across the table to the others, "there's my resignation as one of this committee. And I'll not be here after to-morrow, so it's no use my bothering about it. I'm a single man, and I've got money enough left to get me somewhere else to find a job; and when it gives out I can tramp it. There'll be company enough for me on the roads, I guess, if this thing keeps on."

The others made no reply, and, throwing on his hat, he bade them good-

bye and went out, slamming the door behind him.

"He's about right, Hines," said the other, after he had gone. "If it wasn't that I can't go, for my family, I'd cut it; damned quick, too."

Hines got up and went slowly to a window, and stood with his hands in his pockets, looking out for a minute.

"I could stand most anything," he said, speaking as if to himself, "but the paying the twenty-five dollars to that speaking fellow, the other night. I tell you," he added, turning, and coming back to the table, that he struck with his heavy hand, "that thing made me mad!"

"You're right there," said the other; "and I like to hear you say that, Hines. You've always been so solid for sticking to the order, no matter what happened. That's what that fellow said, 'Stick to it,' 'Stand

out for principle,' and all that. Now, Hines, I want to know what it's all for? What is it we're after with the order but more wages, or the like of that? And, when they're offered, why the devil won't the order let us take them?"

Hines was one of the men who had long had an abiding faith in the power of this combination to do the laboring man great good, and he had been willing, like Darragh, to make personal sacrifices to keep it alive. His assessments had been always promptly paid, and he had rejoiced in its apparently flourishing condition.

"Well," he now said, "I admit we made a mistake there. I told Mr. Alston so the other day. It don't look as though the mill would back down, and we're about at the end of our rope."

"But," replied the other, "you don't answer me. We struck for more pay, and

we got it. There's where the order helped us. We were right in striking, and the way the mill backed down shows it. Now, because working with scabs don't suit the order, they won't let us take what we struck for. I say, Hines, that it ain't right. The order's got up to help *us*, I suppose; not we to help the *order*."

Hines made no answer. His belief in the value of the organization had become a habit with him, and he could not readily part with it. But he had no answer for the words of his companion, that found an echo in his own mind. The logic of events was becoming too strong for the untested theories he had so long entertained.

"I'm at the last notch, myself," the other went on; "we've no food; and it's getting cold and we've nothing to warm or cook with. I never thought to be called a scab, but I'll be one soon; and you may give it

away, if you like. Man!" he added, excitedly, "I never lifted my hand to harm any one, but I'm getting that desperate that I'd do most anything now!"

Hines looked worried, and spoke a few words to quiet and encourage him. "I've got a few dollars of my savings left," he finally said. "I'll divide with you; but don't go do anything rash. There's been enough of that work, by the roughs we've got with us, and I'm afraid they're not done yet. Don't you, a decent man, disgrace yourself that way."

"Well," said the other, more quietly, "I don't mean to if I can help it."

He got up to go. "I may be in the mill to-morrow, or soon, rather than take your money. Don't let them abuse me, Hines, if you can help it. I don't go back on the order because I want to — it's because it will kill me and my family if I don't."

The man spoke these words in almost a broken voice, and Hines, who liked him as an old and tried friend, was much moved.

"They shall not if I've any weight with them at all," he said, firmly. "If they do, I'll follow you, order or no order."

The change in his feelings that could permit of his making even this conditional promise was, in a man of his character and determination, very great: and he fully meant to keep it.

Many of the strikers had left the town, seeking work elsewhere. Some few were able to use the cars, but more went on foot on the highways, utterly destitute, and obliged to beg their bread from one farm-house to another. The greater number, however, were obliged to remain.

Men who are suffering are very apt to be unreasonable, and these, seeing their families in need, and others doing the work that

they had learned to regard as their vested right, they looked on the new-comers with daily increasing hatred. Many who were not naturally inclined to violence of any kind now saw with indifference the frequent attempts against the non-union workmen, and were in a state of mind that was fast becoming dangerous to law and order. The fear of the vengeance of the order kept many true to it, who had long since been disenchanted as to its power to do them any good.

Each man was suspicious of his fellow, and, except among those most intimate, they were actually afraid to express their real sentiments. A kind of reign of terror prevailed that it seemed impossible to break. But the constantly increasing restlessness of the men began to show the leaders that, in spite of their late successful suppression of revolt, they could hardly hold them much longer.

These men, while of not more than average ability, were astute politicians. By the simple processes that others see through, but do not take the trouble to energetically combat, they had originally secured their election to these positions, and now, in order to hold them, it was very essential that they should succeed in carrying the strike through to a substantially successful issue, upon the basis they had persuaded the majority to adopt.

Utterly unscrupulous, they cared little for the suffering of the people, so that they could carry out their ends, and they had had little difficulty in keeping about them a sufficient number of the worst disposed men to overawe the rest, and upon whom they could depend for any illegal acts. A few of these had been arrested and punished; but the greater number escaped, and still formed a dangerous

and facile weapon in the hands of their masters.

Throughout, the leaders and their adherents had stimulated as far as possible the courage and endurance of the strikers by meetings of the order, and by personal appeals and exhortation. As underlying them all there was a covert threat, too well appreciated, they had been so far effectual; for, as has been seen, it needed combination to enable any head to be made against this solid cabal within the organization.

There were many secret meetings of this central junta, to which none were admitted but those who were in full sympathy with the leaders, and pledged to carry the strike to a successful termination by any means. Many plans had been discussed, and some carried out, but so far none had met with the success that had been desired. The non-union workmen still remained in the town.

The man Kohler was always present at their meetings, for, though unpopular with the strikers at large, these men found him a kindred spirit. Learning of the strike, through the newspapers, it had occurred to him that here might be a comparatively safe place to propagate his peculiar doctrines, it being in a small village, probably indifferently provided with police, and the strikers largely of foreign antecedents. He had, therefore, left the back room in the city whence he periodically belched forth fire and slaughter through the inane ravings of an anarchical newspaper, and appeared in F——.

The average New Englander is by nature and education extremely averse to interference with any man's personal liberty, and this fellow had been suffered to remain in F—— and do and say about what he pleased.

It is only justice to say that the larger number of the strikers were not at all in sympathy with his "principles," which might be briefly epitomized as exhortations to burn the town and kill everybody in it who was not an "Associate of Toil" or Anarchist. But the extremists, with whom everything was subordinated to carrying their strike through to a successful ending on their own line, found that the mischievous German, so fertile in suggestions, was also useful in procuring them a considerable number of weapons and ammunition, including a quantity of dynamite.

Their later conferences were upon the most effectual method of utilizing these weapons in an effort to drive the non-union workmen in a body from the town. When they were got rid of, it was proposed to enter the mill and go to work without further explanations

or conference. This would be, as they viewed it, a practical victory. At any rate, they saw no other open to them.

They were able to rely upon fifty or more roughs, who, some of them, joined in their consultations, and it was believed that a few hundred others might be suddenly aroused and led on to mischief by an appeal to their passions and simultaneous movement of the conspirators and their horde.

Nearly seven weeks of the strike had passed. A vague feeling of uneasiness pervaded the village, and every one had an air of strained expectation as of some approaching crisis that could not be long deferred, and the nature of which it was impossible to determine.

The solicitude of the authorities increased, and they quietly added to their precautions, for, though as yet there had been no organized violence, and some dan-

gers had been averted, they feared that something of the kind would be attempted before the leaders and their followers would abandon their grip upon the men. This fear was by no means imaginary, as will be seen.

Upon a cold November evening, nearly at the end of the seventh week of the strike, a number of men were gathered in a by-street of the town. Some stood about the door and steps of a rumshop at the corner of an alley, while others lounged here and there on the sidewalk. Though the men had sauntered up in an apparently aimless way, it was quite evident that their assembling was preconcerted.

The baize doors of the dramshop were constantly swinging as men passed in and out, and scraps of conversation might have been heard by the passers-by, whom the men on the sidewalk were careful not to impede.

"Damn these cartridges!" said one, "you can't use them in a fight."

"Well," was the answer, "what Murphy wants is to blow down the south wall of the corporation block, where that crowd of scabs is."

"Where is Kohler?" asked another man, pressing through the crowd.

"Here I vash," said that disreputable-looking foreigner, as he came through one of the baize doors, wiping his beard with his dirty hand.

"Are we all ready now?" asked the first speaker.

"Yash — I suppose," rejoined the Anarchist. "But you better mine advice haf taken, and had bomps. Dey vash mooch brettier dinks for der pizness."

"You be hanged! We don't want to blow up anything but the buildings. If we are troubled by the police, we'll fight them

fair. We'll outnumber them, and have pistols as well as they."

"We must do something," said Bradford, "to drive out the scabs. If we blow up the houses, they'll 'git,' and the mill will give in. And, if they're gone, we can go to work, any way."

"We can't hold our men much longer," said another, "unless we do something."

"Faith," interrupted Murphy, laughing, with that perception of a joke that is always present with an Irishman, "we can't hould *oursilves*—bad cess to it!"

"Well," said a strong-looking fellow, with a bad face, who seemed to have much authority, "this night's job may beat 'em, after all; damn 'em!"

"Come on now, boys!" he added; "let's go over to the hall. You all have the watchword, and every man knows what he's to do."

"Has Wadsworth had whiskey enough to make him talk?" asked Bradford.

"Yes — yes," answered several, and slowly, by twos and threes, the party lounged away.

There was a regular meeting of the "Associates of Toil" at the hall that evening, called to consult on the situation and receive a report from the finance committee; and the men, by different routes, all took that direction.

CHAPTER XI.

SOME BUCOLIC OPINIONS.

BRAYTON'S resolve to give up some of the more expensive of his farming fancies was not suffered to lapse. He had received a large price for his remaining merinos, and was disposing of a number of high-bred colts and cattle that he had on hand.

On the afternoon spoken of in the last chapter, he was driving a young horse over to show to a gentleman, who had a large fancy farm some distance on the other side of F——, when at a place where the road passed through a hollow and along a causeway lined with willows, the animal sprang out of the track so suddenly as to tax his strength and skill to the utmost to keep him

and the carriage from going off the causeway.

He had the mettlesome but gentle creature under control in an instant, and, looking to ascertain what had caused its fright, he perceived two men sitting at the side of a little thicket, in the shade of the willows, one of whom, not observing that they had frightened the horse, arose, and asked Brayton what time it was. He told him, and, in his turn, asked which way they were walking.

"Well, sir," answered the man, "we started from F—— this afternoon. It's only a matter of four miles, or so, but we ain't much used to walking. Maybe we'll do better before we've got through our journey."

Brayton was a kind-hearted fellow, and, as he was going several miles farther on, and was driving in a roomy Concord

wagon, he told the men to get in and he'd give them a lift, which they seemed very glad to have.

"You're leaving F—— to find work, I suppose?" he said, as they drove on.

"Yes, sir," answered one of the men. "It's all along of the strike. We can't wait no longer for work, and were going to look for it elsewhere. There's lots gone already."

"It's a pity," said Brayton, "that you couldn't have made up with the mill, and all got back to work before this."

"Me and Jim would 'a' done it, sir," answered the man, "but we didn't feel quite safe to, and thought it 'ud be easier just to cut it, and get in quiet somewheres else. We was 'Associates,' you see, sir; and the 'Associates' don't like no ratting."

"Yes, I know," said Brayton. "But what has become of your families?"

"We hain't any families — me and Jim hain't. Them that has, can't leave, and they're having a hard time. We ain't had any too much to eat for a week, ourselves," added the poor fellow, patiently.

Brayton looked at him and was moved to pity, as he observed his hollow eyes and pale face under his half-grown beard.

"Take this," he said, handing them some money, when he reached his destination, and they were starting again on their weary tramp.

On Brayton's return home, he passed Mr. Bradshaw's farm, and, observing the worthy agriculturalist in his farm-yard, where he was engaged in the useful but prosaic occupation of shovelling manure into a cart, with the ultimate intention of spreading it on his fields, he drew up his horse by the fence, and called to him.

Mr. Bradshaw unbent his long person

very much as one would open a jack-knife, and leaned gracefully on his shovel a moment, as if it had been a sword, while he gradually took in the identity of the man in the wagon. When he recognized his visitor, he left his work with that alacrity always observed in the husbandman, when the slightest pretext presents itself, and regardless of the reproach in the mild eyes of his patient oxen, came over to the fence, and, laying his arms on the top rail, settled down for a protracted chat. The suspenders of his overalls accentuated the breadth and leanness of his shoulders as he squared them over the rail, while his sunburned, good-humored face looked out from a straw hat about the size of a Japanese umbrella.

"Waal, George," he said, "I'm glad t' see ye. Haow's the old lady? — Yaas? Thet's a mighty pretty crittur in them shafts," he added, in a confidential tone,

looking critically at the colt; "almighty nice little hoss."

"Yes," said Brayton. "I've made up my mind to sell him, though."

"Sho! — ye don't say so, do ye! Waal I guess ye want a good price fur him. Unless," he went on cautiously, craning his head farther over the fence, "he's suthin' the matter with his legs. Colts most allers duz have."

In utter disregard of his late engrossing labors, Mr. Bradshaw's interest in the conversation now induced him to insure its prolongation by lazily swinging a long leg up, and seating himself on the fence. This accomplished, he detached a large splinter from the top rail, and, drawing from his pocket a preposterous knife, having a blade large enough to split cord-wood, he became equipped for conversation to any extent.

"Haow's yer apples this year, George?" he asked, whittling slowly.

"Pretty well," answered Brayton. "I have plenty, but they don't seem to have filled out well."

"Yaas? waal, it's 'baout so with mine, tew. Naow, haow queer 'tis, ain't it?" added Mr. Bradshaw, with a thoughtful pucker; "if 'tain't one thing, it's another — allers suthin' wrong." He shook his head with an air of philosophical resignation.

"I supposed you might like to speak of those cows," said Brayton.

"In a minnit, George! in a minnit!" answered Mr. Bradshaw, who had no notion of taking up his choicest topic until all other themes had been thoroughly exhausted. "Ther's time enough. By the way, George, speakin' uv cows — haow's the strike a-gittin' on to F ——, George."

"They are still holding out," answered

Brayton. "But the organization can't hold them much longer, I think."

"Them 'Associates uv Toil'?" asked Mr. Bradshaw.

"Yes."

"Yaas? Naow, what all-fired foolishness it is, ain't it, George? Ther's my boy Eben," he went on; "stout young feller 'nuff, but hain't got none tew much sprawl —he would go off to L——, a shoe-makin' in one uv them shops. I sez I wanted him ter stay on th' old place—good farm, but needs young blood ter keep it up. I'm a-gittin' middlin' old myself. But, no, he would go. Wanted ter wear store-clothes, I guess, an' be raound taown evenin's. Thet's 'baout th' heft uv it, I guess."

"So he has left you?" said Brayton; "I haven't seen him lately, but didn't know he had gone away."

"Yaas, this ten months. Waal, 's I wuz

a-sayin', he come home, a while ago, all dressed up ter kill, an' told me all 'baout them 'Associates uv Toil' he'd jined, an' what a big thing 'twas, an' all thet. Sez I, 'Eben, you little numbscull,' sez I, 'I've done more hard labor than ye'll ever do, an' I hain't got no call ter be a 'Associate uv Toil.' But he went on ter tell uv their rules and gov'nment and the resistin' of the encroachments uv capital, an' all sich; and, sez I: 'Naow, shet up! don't ye talk sich stuff ter me. We're livin' in a free country,' sez I, 'an' hain't no use for no gov'nment 'cept that uv Uncle Sam. He's tuk good care uv me so fur; an' what he can't do I can do fur myself.'"

"Well, you were about right," said Brayton, looking at his watch.

"Naow, George," said Mr. Bradshaw, anxiously, for he was thoroughly enjoying himself, "don't ye be in a hurry; it's airly

yit. Well, as I wuz a-sayin'," he went on, "I sez to mother that night, sez I, 'Aour Eben allers wuz a blamed fool, an' I guess he ain't no less uv one, naow he's a "Associate uv Toil," than he wuz afore.'"

Brayton here lifted the colt's head from the fence, over which it was leaning, with the rein, and showed some signs of impatience.

"Waal," continued Mr. Bradshaw, narrowly watching him, "Eben is on a strike naow, tew, Eb is; and I expect," he added, with an expansive smile, "that he'll be comin' along home directly, to git suthin' t' eat. Darned little jackass!"

Brayton laughed, and gathered up his reins, settling himself in his seat.

"I really must be off, Mr. Bradshaw," he said; "do you think you care for either of those heifers?"

Mr. Bradshaw spit meditatively, and his

face took on a look of unspeakable wisdom.

"Half Durham ye said, George?"

"Yes; I have told you that a dozen times," said Brayton, smiling.

"I'm afeared ye set 'em too high," said Mr. Bradshaw. "Naow, what did ye think uv that crumple caow."

"What's yer hurry?" he added, in great alarm, as Brayton, remarking that he was not thinking of the crumpled cow at all, started his horse and drove off at a good pace.

"Waal — good-bye, *good-bye!*" shouted Mr. Bradshaw as the team rapidly disappeared.

"What's the good uv bein' in sich a hurry," he grumbled to himself as he examined his whittled stick with great care, turning it first on one side and then the other. "A man can't trade in no sich way." Then mentally determining to catch

Brayton at home early some afternoon and enjoy the 'precious season' that he had been disappointed of this time, he looked up and down the road in the vain hope that some other acquaintance would happen along and keep him yet longer from a return to his labors. This wish not being gratified, he threw away his stick, returned his knife to his pocket, and, slowly dropping his legs from the fence, turned his reluctant attention once more to his muck-heap and oxen.

"Whoa hesh, Buck! Haw, Bright — whoa there! what's yer hurry?" remarked Mr. Bradshaw, to those much-enduring beasts.

As Brayton drove homeward, he could not help thinking of the fatuity that took these young men away from their fathers' farms to become wage-earners. Here was Bradshaw, with a comfortable farm, that only needed the work of young and inter-

ested hands to keep it in good order, and his only son would not stay and do it. The farm would soon begin to deteriorate, while the man who could have had peace and plenty there, chose to earn scanty wages in a town, probably for all his life.

To Brayton, who loved his fields and doted on his live-stock, and to whom the most ordinary incidents of farming were a constant source of interest, the stupidity of this young man was incomprehensible.

As he drove through F——, he was stopped by a detective in plain clothes, who had been for some little time in the employ of the town.

As Brayton drew up to the sidewalk, the man motioned to him to drive into an open carriage-way leading from the street, and, looking up and down to see that they had not been observed, he came to the side of the wagon.

"Did you see the chief of police?" he asked.

"No," said Brayton, "what is it?"

"He was looking for you," said the man. "The fact is, we really think that crowd are up to something to-night."

"What are they concocting — do you know?" asked Brayton.

"As near as I can make out, they are going to try and blow up that wall again."

"What! of the south tenements?" asked Brayton.

"Yes; that's their scheme."

"How can they get there," said Brayton, "without being seen? There are pickets there night and day since that cartridge was found."

"Yes, but they are going to try a mob and force things this time."

"They'll never dare that! will they?" said Brayton. "And there are not enough

bad ones to make a show, I should think."

"There's more than you think, sir," returned the man; "and there's two or three hundred more who are not of themselves inclined to mischief, but are suffering and desperate, and might easily be drawn into it."

Brayton thought a moment. "Is the detail from M—— here?" he asked.

"Yes, it was telegraphed for, and got over this noon. I do believe they mean business this time, sir," continued the man. "Some of them think that if they could scare the scabs out, the mill would give in, or, at least, there'd be no scabs to work with, and they could go in without a backdown. So they talk, and they've got to do something soon, or not at all."

"Yes? well, I have my doubts whether they do it, after all," said Brayton, reflecting,

as he flicked the flies from the colt's quarter.

"I'll be back in town as soon as I have tea," he said directly; "there's no hurry, I suppose?"

"Oh, no," said the detective. "They are going up there after the meeting, if they can start the crowd from the hall. Meanwhile we have a strong force there, and the M—— detail will slip round as soon as it's dark."

"That's right — I'll be back before that," said Brayton; and, starting the colt, now becoming a little restive, he drove out of the yard. As he passed Mr. Hardy's house, he drew rein and jumped from the wagon.

Keeping his eye on his horse, he went up the steps and rang the bell, running back again in time to catch the reins as the animal made a start.

"Say to Miss Hardy," he said to the

servant that came to the door, "that I wish she would come to the door a moment, as I cannot leave my horse, and would like to speak with her."

"I can't leave this horse," he said to Ellen as she appeared. "I wanted to ask you and your father to remain at home this evening, as there might be a little rumpus in the streets, and I should be glad to know you were both at home."

"What is it, — what is going to happen? George?" There had been a number of alarms and rumors lately, and she was becoming thoroughly nervous and frightened.

"Oh!" he replied, "I doubt if it amounts to anything, but I wanted to be on the safe side with you, darling."

"But where shall you be, George? I want to be on the safe side with you, too."

"Don't worry about me, dear! — I shall

be all right! there isn't the least danger, you see. I didn't want you to get into any crowd —that is all. But I won't keep you in the street here any longer, so good-bye. I'll be in in the morning."

He was rather anxious to be no further questioned. He had not wished to alarm her, and only the possibility of her being in the street, and subjected perhaps to annoyance and danger, had induced him to run the risk of causing her the lesser evil of anxiety.

As he drove home, he almost regretted having done so, for he entertained great doubt of the genuineness of the proposed attempt.

CHAPTER XII.

LAWLESSNESS.

THE meeting of the "Associates of Toil" that evening was ostensibly called for conference as to the prospect of further outside aid. There was a conspicuous absence of the better class of men, and there were no women present. Many had given up attending these numerous meetings, fruitless of result, that only seemed to be held for the opportunity afforded for windy declamation. This night many feared to come, for there was danger in the air. Still the hall was tolerably well filled.

Instead of the well fed, comfortable-looking men, of quiet demeanor, who, for the

most part, had filled the place a month before, most of the faces were haggard and restless; many showed the blood-shot eyes and strained expression of men who were drinking hard, and some of those present were more or less under the influence of liquor.

Hines, the chairman of the finance committee, addressed the meeting, but his spirit and determination appeared to be broken. In a depressed way, he told them that the committee had worked hard and done all that they could, but the contributions came in very slowly, and some had ceased altogether. The calls on the executive board were responded to as far as fairly encouraging letters went, but they seemed to find it impossible to send much money. One of the committee had resigned, and gone away. He didn't see how they could go on much longer. They had hardly any money

in hand, and he didn't know what to advise. As he concluded, he looked about him in a cheerless way, sat down on a chair on the platform, and wiped his face with his handkerchief.

There was an angry murmur in the audience, and the man Wadsworth jumped upon a chair in the middle of the room. He was an Englishman, of good abilities, and had received a university education. Losing position and prospects, years before, through his incurably bad habits, he had long eked out his living, when sober, by ordinary unskilled work. When elated by a sufficiency of liquor, he was a ready speaker, and, disgusted with life, and possessed with rancor against those more virtuous than himself, he could always be relied upon for violent philippics against the established order of things.

"Brethren!" he shouted, "we *can't* hold

on much longer! We are lying under the hand of our oppressors, and our resources are nearly spent. Our families are starving. What is the effective weapon in the hands of this soulless corporation that they are using to crush us? It's these accursed *scabs*, brethren!"

As he pronounced these words his voice rose almost to a shriek; then he stopped short. Cries of "That's so!" "Damn 'em!" "Kill 'em!" sprang up all over the hall.

After waiting a moment, he resumed. "Yes," he said, slowly, "they ought to be killed, for they are killing *us*, — killing our wives and our children. They come and steal our work and our money, — the very bread out of our mouths. And every day they take away our hope of victory over our oppressor! How long shall we endure it? How much longer can we endure it?

Brethren, we never can conquer till we drive them out. When they go, the mill gives in. Let us do it, then, and do it to-night. We are ready. Your leaders are here!"

"Come on, then!" shouted several. The men of the street assemblage passed rapidly through the crowd, shouting to be led on, and a general movement began toward the door.

A few tried to stem the torrent, and called to the men to stop, but they were unheeded, or silenced with blows; and, under the lead of the organized body of conspirators, a considerable mob was in a moment on the street, ready for any mischief. Once there, the cry was raised, "On to the south tenements, and drive out the scabs!"

As they moved onward, certain men seemed to assume direction, though not the

slightest order was maintained. One of these men presently called out, "Where's Kohler?" A rather weak voice responded from the middle of the crowd, "Here I vash,—I leads you! Yes, yes!"

It was more than an hour since the Anarchist had tasted beer, which may, perhaps, have accounted for his husky, insufficient tones at this triumphant moment, when his teachings seemed on the point of immediate fruition.

The detective who had spoken that afternoon to Brayton had been about the outside of the hall, and, gathering from the exclamations of the men, as they swarmed out, of their destination and purpose, he made haste to warn the force that was already at the threatened point.

The south tenements, as they were called, composed a large brick block, owned by the B—— Corporation, and let to those in their employ.

They had been undergoing repairs and were unoccupied at the time of the strike; the repairs, however, were just completed. The block was adjacent to the mill itself; and, enclosed on three sides by the mill flume and river. They could only be approached by a single street, that led to one end of the block and followed around its wall, ending at the flume. These facts had determined their occupancy by the non-union workmen, as they were easily watched and could be defended by a comparatively small force, if properly posted.

As the crowd gathered and began to move forward, some of the empty-handed were given revolvers, by the leading spirits, who seemed to have a few to spare, and, as they came opposite the store of our friend Jones, a man called out, "He's got some pistols in there and axes! let's go for them;" and six or eight men sprang upon the store

porch, and thundered at the door. It was rather a rickety affair, and, as it was not opened, they put their shoulders against it, and it readily yielded.

Mr. Jones was about going home for the night, to retire and dream of his rather depressing business affairs, when he heard a great noise in the street and, presently, a violent knocking at his door, in which he had only turned the key. As he sprang forward to throw the heavy wooden bar across, fully realizing that this was no ordinary summons, he instinctively seized an axe from a little stack by the counter end, reaching the door just as it gave way to the efforts of the rioters. At a glance he took in the exact situation of affairs. Before him were half a dozen powerful men, just straightening themselves from their push, and about to step across the threshold; while behind them, and dimly seen in the

dark, the crowd nearly filling the street was pressing by, with shouts, and sound of many feet. But he did not flinch.

The fierce blood of his pagan Welch ancestry, thickened with later puritanic determination, was up instantly, and this usually quiet citizen had become dangerous.

"I'll split the head of the first man that crosses that door!" he exclaimed, in unmistakeable tones, swinging his axe around his head like a feather.

"Come on, you sneaking hounds!" shouted he, in growing excitement; "you ain't around behind some poor fellow, this time! you're in front of a man who means death!"

The men hesitated. — They did not like his looks. The door was narrow and one certainly must go down if they persisted. The crowd, also, were leaving them behind.

"Let's go," said the foremost; "it ain't worth while wasting time here." And they jumped down the steps and ran after the others, while Mr. Jones quietly lowered his axe and put up the bar.

Many of the crowd remained unarmed, only adding the momentum and courage of numbers to the movement.

It was hardly nine o'clock when the mob turned into the short street leading to the South tenements. They had gone but a short distance when, by one of those checks communicated from front to rear almost instantaneously, it stood still, as a commanding voice rang out, in front: —

"Halt, there! Stand — or we shall fire into you!"

The men looked in each other's faces for an instant, and then shouts arose: — "Get on there!" — "Damn the police!" — "Run over 'em!" — "Kill them!"

Then the loud voice toward the head of the street was again heard through the crowd. It was that of George Brayton, who had returned to the village and joined the reserve police force at this place during the evening, and now stood on the upper step of a house porch, and but a few paces in front of the leading files of the mob; being slightly above them, his voice could be heard far down the street.

"As a magistrate, I order you to disperse!" he said, "and if—"

He was here interrupted by the shouts of the mob, that, however, did not yet advance.

"You get away—you, and your police!" said a man called O'Donnell, stepping from the front ranks. "We are armed and mean business, and are too many for you."

"Stop!" shouted Brayton, as a movement began in the crowd. "We will not allow

you to injure people and property in this town! We are here to prevent it, and we shall do so!"

The police, perhaps twenty-five in number, a select body of men, vigorous of frame and stout of heart, were formed across the street, every man club in hand, and with a revolver in his belt. Behind them might have been about an equal number of special police, and watchmen who had come from the tenements and mill yard. The captain of the police from M—— stood in advance of his line, coolly looking into the angry faces, not more than twenty paces in front of him and glancing at Brayton.

The superintendent of the mill and Mr. Alston stood on the sidewalk near him. They had been conversing in the mill office when a watchman told them that a mob was starting for the tenements; and they had gone across and joined Brayton and the

police detachment a few minutes before, with a desire to "bear a hand, and take in all that there was going," as Alston expressed it to the police captain. Alston was not a man to be much troubled with fears for his own safety, and, as Brayton was speaking, he stepped up to the men, who had gradually worked forward, and stood in advance of the crowd.

"Look here, men," he said in a loud voice, as Brayton finished, "don't you make damned fools of yourselves in this way! You know me, — I've done all I could to patch up matters. Now just drop this nonsense and go home, like good fellows, and come and see me, some of you, to-morrow, and settle matters in a more rational way."

"Yes," shouted a gigantic weaver; "you're a good man, Mr. Alston; but when your mill hires scabs we won't stand it. For God's sake look out, sir — you'll be

killed!" he added, seizing him suddenly, and pushing him roughly across the side-walk into a door-way.

For at that moment a man in the crowd, apparently weary of the slight delay in front, deliberately aimed his revolver at Brayton and fired. The ball went wide of the mark; but the discharge put an end to farther parley, and the mob pressed tumultuously upon the line of police.

"Forward, men!" sung out the captain; "let them have it!" In a moment the fight became general.

Just as the first shot was fired, Darragh, who had arrived in town a few minutes before, and, learning of what was going forward, had followed the mob and pushed his way through it to the front, appealing at every step to the men to give over their mad purpose. As he reached the front he shouted: "For God's sake, men, are you all

crazy! The order will not stand by you, if this goes on. Stop! stop!" It was too late. His words were drowned in the shouts and execrations of the surging crowd. Carried forward and almost off his feet by the rush, he received, the next instant, a crushing blow on the head, and dropped to the ground, insensible.

As Darragh forced his way to the front, another man quietly sneaked from the rear of the crowd, and crept up a side street — a short, fat man, with a black beard. It was the Anarchist, seeking cover, after the manner of his kind. His gross face was pale and flabby, and his labored breath and rapid step, as he made good time up the cross street, sufficiently indicated his heroic determination to live yet longer for the cause that supported him in vicious idleness, and supplied him with beer. "Mein Gott! but dot vash dancherous!" he mut-

tered, as he heard the pistol-shots in his rear.

Meanwhile, things were exceedingly warm towards the head of the street.

The police, striking right and left, were at first borne back by the weight and rush of the mob, but, as every man, with the quiet intrepidity that usually characterizes them, kept his face to the front, and used his heavy club with zeal and precision, they soon began to hold and gain ground.

They were well supported by those in their rear, who filled all breaches in the line. Many of the leading spirits of the mob were knocked down, and when the police began to return the fusillade of the rioters with their own revolvers, the crowd wavered, began to run, and in an incredibly brief time melted away. A few men in the hands of the police and some others lying in the street where they fell, were in a few

minutes all that were left of the formidable body that just before was menacing the peace of the town.

While the conflict was at its height, John Vance, on his way home, had paused far down the street, as he heard the angry roar of the mob and noise of the combat. He stood but a moment when several shots admonished him of his danger, for he was directly in the line of fire, and he was in the act of turning to go when a 44-calibre bullet struck him full in the breast.

He started convulsively, turned slowly around, and, throwing up one hand, as if in unconscious remonstrance, toward heaven, he fell upon his face, dead.

CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER THE ÉMEUTE.

THE police cleared the ground at once of their wounded comrades, and secured their prisoners, mostly men who had been more or less injured.

Some of the strikers, but slightly hurt, managed to get to their feet and take themselves off before they could be apprehended.

Darragh came to himself, leaning upon the arm of the superintendent, who had recognized him as he pushed through the crowd at the beginning of the affray.

"My dear fellow," said the superintendent, "I hope you're not much hurt; you did your best to stop this, any way."

"No, I'm not much hurt," replied Dar-

ragh; "but, God help us, this is a terrible piece of business." He rose to his feet with difficulty, and staggered against the wall of a building. "Yes, it is a bad business," said the superintendent; "this is what comes of your wretched 'Associates of Toil' silliness. Perhaps you see it now," he added, a little ungenerously, for he was excited and angry at this senseless outbreak.

Darragh looked at him with a dazed expression.

"I can't talk of it yet," he said, slowly; "I must go and see that there be no more mischief done." And, rallying himself, he went down the street with uncertain steps.

"Who is this?" said a policeman, as he turned a body over. "He is quite dead, and no wonder," he added as he saw the bullet wound over the heart.

As the body was turned, and the rays

from a street-lamp shining through its shattered glass, streamed over the handsome face, its expression was peaceful and quiet, as of one who sleeps. The captain came up and stooped over the body. One hand of the dead man was clutching something white, and removing it from the stiffening fingers, he found it to be an unopened letter, and read the direction. "Mrs. John Vance," he muttered. "Do you know a John Vance, Mr. Malcolm?" he said to the superintendent, who had stopped by his side.

"Know him? why, he was our best machinist. Good God, is this poor Vance!" he exclaimed, kneeling by the body. "Poor fellow, poor fellow! he never meant to be in this thing! He told me, only a day or two ago, that he was going up to New Hampshire. He was sick of the strike, and wished he had never been in it." The superintendent's voice trembled.

"I liked that man," he added; "and here is the end of him!"

"What shall be done with the body?" said the captain; "and here is this letter; it was in his hand."

"I will take it to his wife," said the superintendent, still looking sadly at the dead man; "and you will send the body there. I will prepare her, poor woman!"

And at midnight poor Mary Vance sat with staring eyes by the body of her husband. An open letter lay upon the floor, at her feet. It was only a few lines, written by a hand that had oftener guided the plough than the pen; but how welcome it would have been to her a few hours before.

"Dear Mary," it ran; "I am pleased to have you and John come. He can have work with me this winter if he wants to. I send you a money order for twenty-five

dollars; it will be enough to bring you here. Come right away and we'll talk over things when you get here.

"Your affec. father,

"ENOCH PAGE.

"P. S. I want to see the children very much."

Ellen Hardy's anxiety was not relieved until late in the evening. Her father had declined to heed the advice of Brayton, and started out to find the Catholic priest and see if they together could not reach some of the men and avert the impending trouble.

But the people they sought did not go to the meeting at the hall, and had no part in the disturbance. Their good intentions were futile, and it was only after the riot that they were able to do something in aid of the injured.

When the minister reached home, Ellen had just learned of what had happened.

"Take me down there, father," she said, when told of Vance's death; "take me down to see that poor Mrs. Vance. I want to go now. She must not be alone in her sorrow."

"Had you not better wait until the morning, my daughter; I have been there, and everything possible has been done for her to-night."

But Ellen insisted, and, knowing that her woman's instinct was a safer guide in such matters than his own, he accompanied her back through the rainy night, for the mist had now merged into a steady rain.

It was a little after seven on the following morning, and Ellen was about returning to her home, leaving matters in the hands of some kind women who were anxious to be of use to their poor neighbor, when a knock

came at the door, and Ellen opened it. Hines and the other remaining member of the finance committee stood in the entry. Taking off his hat as Ellen appeared, Hines asked if they could see Mrs. Vance.

"What do you wish with her?" said Ellen.

"Well, Miss Hardy," replied Hines, who knew her, "you'd do as well perhaps. We're all feeling very bad about last night's business, and poor Vance. We had a little money in our hands, and wanted to give her some of it to help her. The strike is over; they'll not need it no more — the others. You'll take it for her, ma'am, perhaps?" he added.

He spoke in a low tone, but it had been heard in the room; and, as Ellen hesitated whether or not to accept what they offered, the handle of the door was removed from her grasp, and, turning, she found Mrs.

Vance standing by her side in the doorway.

"Come in," she said, in a constrained tone to the men, taking no notice of Ellen, who saw that her eyes had a strange, wild gleam. "I want you in here a moment."

The men looked at her with pity and some surprise. They hesitated and were reluctant to enter, but as she stood holding the door open for them to pass, with her eyes fixed upon them, they seemed constrained to obey, and followed her to the side of the bed where her husband's body was stretched out, covered by the sheet, awaiting its coffin. She removed the cloth from the face, and turned to them.

"You must not come to me with money —you 'Associates of Toil'!" she said. The men looked at her, and then on the cold white features of the dead man; sor-

rowfully enough, for all had liked bright, kind-hearted John Vance.

"Money will not undo this work of yours," she went on, still in the same unnatural voice; "I wanted you to see it. If it had not been for your order, he and I would be happy together to-day." She pointed to the face as she spoke. "Go!" she added, in a voice fast stifling with tears, and, falling on her knees by the bedside, she buried her face in her hands, and cried bitterly.

The poor men, who had meant her only kindness, grew red and pale, then turned, and, with a helpless, grieved look, went slowly out of the room, forgetting their errand, in the presence of her sorrow, and cut to the heart by her words; for they could not feel that they were wholly undeserved.

George Brayton found Ellen at home a

few hours later, looking sad and weary from her painful vigil of the night.

After their first greetings, he remarked presently: "Well, at least, dear, the wretched business of last night has ended the strike. They are going into the mill, all hands; where they still, most of them, can find room — thanks to Malcolm and Alston."

"Yes," she said, "the women told me that they were going back this afternoon. But, George, there's much they cannot repair or forget."

"Have you been all night at the Vances', Ellen?" he asked, gently.

"Yes. George, that poor Mrs. Vance is almost heart-broken. I can think of nothing else but her sorrow. Her husband was such a handsome, manly fellow."

"She will want money," said Brayton. "Let me give you what is wanted."

"No. Mr. Alston sent me a check for

her this morning, that is more than sufficient. A committee of the 'Associates of Toil' came while I was there and offered her money."

"That's like their impudence," said Brayton.

"No, George, she answered. "These men meant it kindly, I am sure; and they were very, very sorry for her. But she heard them, and herself refused. I thought that she was insane for the moment, her excitement was so great. She held them responsible for his death."

"Well, so they are," said Brayton; "and not so remotely either. I tell you, Ellen," he added, warmly, "this thing has shown me the utter hollowness of the pacific, law-abiding utterances of this organization. For, in the face of them, everywhere, their members commit all sorts of excesses, and they never expel them or mark their disap-

probation of such conduct in the slightest practical manner; and if any advantage results to the order by reason of them, which, fortunately, is seldom, they triumphantly use it, ignoring the means that produced the end."

"It is difficult, indeed," said Ellen, "to see how they can escape responsibility if they allow these things to be done."

"They remind me," Brayton went on, "of the Indian Chiefs whom I once saw in a council in Colorado after some massacres had been committed by their tribe. They told the army officers, with much smoking of pipes and professions of the highest esteem, 'that they couldn't help it; they couldn't control their young men, who were hot-blooded,' etc., etc. And on their persons at the same moment were trinkets torn from the murdered emigrant women, and some of them rode stolen white men's horses to the council."

"Well, George," she answered, "many of these men are misled, I am sure, and do not recognize wrong under a specious guise of high-sounding words."

The minister came in at this moment. Like everybody in F——, he was full of the all-absorbing topic.

"Ah, George," he said, with a pleased tone, "out of evil the Lord hath brought good. How glad I am to be told that this strike is over."

"Yes, it is over," said Brayton.

"For the sake of those who have suffered," continued Mr. Hardy, "I am truly thankful. George," he added, thoughtfully, as he seated himself in his arm-chair, "do you know that the wrong-headedness of these people has been more than redeemed by other traits that have been brought into strong relief by their hardships?"

"*I* know it, father," said Ellen; "I have seen it."

"If, George," continued the minister, "you had seen, as we have, the noble self-sacrifice and thoughtful care for others — the strong feeling and quick sympathies among them, you would have learned to love them, even as I do."

"And yet," said George, "for the sake of an absurdity, they were oppressively unjust to the non-union men, and gave over their own flesh and blood to suffering."

"It only shows," answered Mr. Hardy, "that a single error may warp and destroy the symmetry of the noblest natures. But God," he added solemnly, "has for his own wise purposes created us all weak and imperfect. We can only strive for the best. Who among us can hope to attain it — nay, even witness it — on this side of heaven?" . . .

As it is said that the long sustained fire of artillery, by its repeated concussions, will produce marked atmospheric changes in the vicinity of the battle-field, so, figuratively speaking, the revolver-shots of that night seemed to clear the air and dispel the moral miasma of obstinate persistence in wrong, sustained by fear, and signalized by brutality and injustice, that had so long brooded over this once peaceful community. To do them justice, a large number of the strikers could under no consideration have been drawn into the riot, and were satisfied with its summary suppression. None the less true, however, was it that if it had succeeded in its purpose, and the non-union men been driven from their work, these same men would have reaped such advantage as might have resulted from it, and it would then have been proclaimed far and wide that the "Associates of Toil" had succeeded in this strike.

As things now stood, the leaders and their lawless followers abandoned the game, and, indeed, a considerable number, who had been, as they feared, recognized that night, had decamped at once; some others were in custody, and the main body of the strikers, by common consent, treated the strike as over.

No further regard was paid to their late organization. It was as if it had never been: and men and women once more acted like free and independent citizens. Quite illogically, but rather naturally, all treated the failure of the rioters as a settlement of the whole matter of the non-union men, and also as stamping the order of the "Associates of Toil" as a failure, and of no further value, in F—— at least. Elsewhere it might take care of itself. It was no longer concern of theirs.

All remaining, applied for work at the

mill forthwith, and received it at the rates of wages recently established, without any allusion to the past, except in the cases of a very few, who were believed to have been concerned in some acts of violence.

The superintendent and Alston were not influenced by the last events to alter their policy with regard to this matter, and, in spite of a little bluster on the part of some of the corporation, who were naturally incensed at this incendiary attempt, the people came back.

In the search, by the authorities, for those known to be implicated in the riot, some inquiry was made for Kohler the anarchist, and it was ascertained that he had boarded the train, going West, that passed through F—— at ten on that evening.

He was seen there no more; but, a week later, a copy of an Anarchist sheet found its way into the hands of a German

operative, who, entirely sick of such stuff, for the present at least, pointed out its leading editorial to the superintendent with a grin.

It was a poorly printed little seven-by-nine publication, full of the most inconceivable rubbish, and the article in question, being freely translated to Mr. Malcolm, ran something in this wise: —

"The strike against oppression in F—— has failed, because of the pusillanimity of the oppressed ones. The Brother Kohler, there for many weeks, was seeking them to inspire with his eloquence. He it was who them against the robber-baron-castle led. Heroically he himself exposed, and dared the death from bloody police murderers. But all in vain. They would have left him to alone die. He has the dust of F—— from his grand feet shaken, and them left to grovel before the oppressor. There let them lie. Bah!"

In a few days, the town resumed its usual appearance. Boycotts were all "off." The non-union men and those who had been "Associates of Toil" fraternized, as though there never had been the least feeling existing between them. The greater and minor industries of the town were resumed, and the strike in the B—— Mill became only a matter of history.

But its baleful effects could not be readily effaced. Many a poor operative and struggling family had good reason to wish that it had never been.

Some adults and a number of poor little children, had succumbed to the suffering and want of that wretched time; while, from the effects of insufficient food, and the lack of the common comforts of life then endured, some could not rally, and the succeeding winter was full of sickness, that brought death and

sorrow into many families. The business of the village had received serious injury; while the great corporation itself, left behind in the close competitive struggle with its rivals, was obliged to enter upon a course of careful management, with reduced working and production, felt alike by its stockholders and by the operatives, — and the outcome of it all is not yet.

Poor Mary Vance buried her husband, and, with her children, went, a broken-hearten woman, to her old home, there to endure for many years a life embittered by the terrible events of that night.

Sitting by the door one summer evening, her father passed, on his way from the field. He was an old man, somewhat bowed by the heavy labor of a lifetime. But his eye was clear, and in the tired look on his face there was no shadow of discontent. Lead-

ing an even and calm life among the fields and forests of his native mountains, his struggle for a livelihood had never been with his fellow-men, but with the yielding and generous soil, aided by the kindly forces of nature. Far from the bustle and rush of town life, he needed its meretricious excitement as little as he longed for its unsatisfying pleasures. And Mary thought, as she looked at him, how much more life had been to him than to those others among whom she had lived so many years; and, with unutterable longing, she thought of her poor husband, who had nearly reached this place.

"Ah, how happy we should have been here together! — oh, John — John!" she murmured, with her face in her hands. And her little boy ran from his play to see what was the matter with poor mamma. . . .

"Waal, mother," observed Mr. Bradshaw, when he understood that the strike was over, and had, with great interest, listened to the particulars of the riot, "them fellers didn't make much out of their darned tomfoolery, I cal'late. Ye'll remember what I've allers said baout these blamed "Associates of Toil." I expect Eb'll be a-gittin' a bullet-hole in his little carcass in a few days, ef he don't quit strikin.' Naow, ez I wuz a sayin'"—

"You wuz always a sayin' a sight too much," interrupted Mrs. Bradshaw, incisively. "If I was you, I'd take that there candle and go to bed."

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

ABOUT a week after the conclusion of the strike, Alston was sitting with his wife in his library, and with them was Mr. Phillips, who had been beguiled from his usual evening haunts by that little lady's invitation to dine a second time with them.

An incorrigible club-man, and a bachelor of so many years' standing that the ladies had long since given him up, even as he had them,—he rarely went into society, and was usually left in peace to his whist at the club, or an occasional little dinner where only gentlemen appeared. But he had chosen in this case to break over his rule and accept her invitation; so, confirming

her preconceived opinion of his sound judgment and great discrimination. He made himself very agreeable during dinner, and Mrs. Alston felt in herself the consciousness of a new social power as this ancient recluse, hitherto considered impervious to woman's fascination, unbent to her efforts to make things pleasant. When, to her suggestion that they adjourn to the library where the gentlemen could smoke without depriving her of their society, Mr. Phillips gallantly responded that there were some women for whom one could almost abjure the use of the Indian weed forever. She felt that this inveterate woman-hater was, indeed, at last conquered, and led the way to the library with the air of a genuine little queen of hearts.

Alston had learned to like Mr. Phillips for his innate kindness of heart, and was delighted to see him thaw out in this man-

ner and the party was a very pleasant one. The conversation during dinner had been varied, but, as they lighted their cigars, it drifted around to the old topic of the event that had recently occupied so much of their attention.

"Are you not greatly relieved, Mr. Phillips," said Mrs. Alston, "that our wretched strike has ended?"

"I am, indeed," he responded.

"And," she continued, "it must be so gratifying to you that your kindness and long suffering with the people has enabled the most of them to regain their old places, and be preserved from want."

"Madam," replied the president, urbanely, as he bowed to his hostess, "you do me far too much honor; Alston, here," he added, waving his cigar towards her husband, "backed by you, was, I suspect, the great philanthropist of our little drama."

Mr. Phillips leaned back in his chair, and smoked industriously.

"And," persisted Mrs. Alston, laughing, "backed by you, too, with advice and with money, as I happen to know."

Mr. Phillips looked a little annoyed.

"Yes," went on Mrs. Alston. "I know all about your noble generosity, Mr. Phillips. It is idle for you to attempt denial."

Mr. Phillips looked at Alston with an air of patient disapproval.

"You married men," he said, relapsing, in his disgust, into his usual concise style, "keep nothing; — unsafe — very."

"Well, Mr. Phillips," said Alston, laughing in a rather abashed way, "if you were married, you would have some consideration for a fellow; — for these women are the most insidious, wheedling" —

"Ned," interrupted Mrs. Alston, "how dare you! Mr. Phillips," she added, turn-

ing to that gentleman, over whose face a sardonic smile might be seen spreading, like the light of the rising moon upon a rugged landscape, "Mr. Phillips, I assure you that our husbands *will* tell us everything, whether we want to hear it or not. Fortunately, we get a little grain out of all the chaff."

Alston smiled and coughed significantly, but wisely held his peace.

"I think," continued Mrs. Alston, with a radiant smile, "that Mr. Phillips now understands the matter perfectly; and I am quite sure that he will forgive my innocent knowledge of his kindness."

"Oh, certainly!" returned Mr. Phillips, politely, exchanging his late peculiar smile for one of less equivocal meaning; "certainly, if you will so characterize the thing. But," he added, "suppose we change the subject. The fellows all fairly at it again?" he asked of Alston.

"Yes," said Alston, "they are; and they are apparently very glad of it."

A servant entered at this moment.

"Ned," said Mrs. Alston, "there is a gentleman downstairs — a Mr. Darragh — who wishes to see you. Is it the one whom you have so often told me of?"

"Oh, yes!" said Alston. "I asked him to come and see me some time, as I wished to talk with him. Would you mind his joining us here, Mr. Phillips? I think you would be interested in him, for he is a very manly and intelligent fellow."

"Delighted, I'm sure!" said the president.

"I wish," said Mrs. Alston, "that I, too, might meet him, of whom I've heard so much good. But I must be at the Browning class this evening, and I hear the carriage now. Do you like Browning, Mr. Phillips?"

"Browning!" answered that gentleman, with a gasp. "Ah, well, not exactly. Something of a poet, but a little obscure."

"Ah, you would understand him better if you studied him, I'm sure."

"I fear not. Life is but short, my dear madam."

Mrs. Alston laughed. "Well, good-bye," she said, giving him her hand; "I shall have all your conversation at second hand, by and by, whether interesting or otherwise. Ned can't help rehearsing it to me, poor fellow!" And, shaking her finger at her husband, who ventured no reply but a grimace, she disappeared.

"You have heard of the president of the B——, Mr. Darragh?" said Alston, as Darragh entered the room, a moment after. "He knows of you, rest assured."

Darragh bowed to Mr. Phillips, and ex-

pressed his regret that he had called at perhaps an inopportune time.

"Not the least in the world," said Alston, heartily; "we are both very glad to see you. Won't you have a cigar?" he added, handing him the box.

"Thank you," said Darragh, "but I rarely smoke."

Mr. Phillips attentively regarded this man, who had at first exercised so much power in F——, and latterly so utterly failed in his influence. He saw at once that this failure could have arisen from no lack in the man himself. For his high-mindedness and honesty were to be read in his face; and he realized more plainly than before the magnitude of the evil that would not permit men to follow such a leader when he sought to extricate them from a false position.

Darragh's expression was very sober, and

his face looked worn and sad, as of one who had been ill.

"I hope," said Alston, "that you have been none the worse for that unlucky crack, Mr. Darragh?"

"Oh, no," replied Darragh; "I soon got over that. I wish I could put some other things aside as easily."

"I wanted," Alston went on, "to have a little talk with you about matters, now the thing is over, in F——. I have thought a good deal about this labor question, and very seriously, too. Naturally, I feel that you regard it from a different standpoint, and I wanted the benefit of your views. I don't believe Mr. Phillips will mind joining in a little discussion of this matter with us."

He paused.

"Shall be glad to hear you both," said Mr. Phillips, lighting a fresh cigar. "Fire away!"

Darragh looked at him as if expecting something farther, but saw no signs of it in his composed and rather saturnine expression; and, as Alston looked inquiringly at himself, he said, presently: —

"I do not think I can give you much light. I am in a very confused and hopeless state of mind about these matters, just now."

"Well," said Alston, "that is just the time when the mind gets down to its true bearings, after all. We have both, as it were, slipped our old moorings and are afloat, looking for an anchorage. Some of our former prejudices and fixed ideas are sloughed off, and we can look at things more impartially, each with perhaps a little different bent."

"Yes," said Darragh, with a sigh; "that is true — there is something in that."

"All right," said Alston. "Now, to

begin with, allow me to suggest that, in my judgment, while the laboring-man may, in some cases, be in rather a bad fix, yet all the rumpus he is making is wrong, paradoxical as this may seem."

"I confess," said Darragh, "that I don't quite follow you."

"Well, hold on till I get a little farther. Now he is going in for more wages every time. When he has been kept too low, he usually gets an advance: that's all right. But he will presently, perhaps, try for a little more still — your order proposes to keep him at it, I presume. Well, here we are, all sorts of people, rich and poor, with our money invested in manufacturing stocks. We must have some income from them. We are willing to divide with the operative, but we can't give him all. We must live as well as he. Perhaps you are not aware of our difficulty in squeezing out small div-

idends? At all events, matters are in that state that when our friend tries it again he cannot have it. Then what?"

Alston stopped. He had been speaking rapidly, and now relighted his cigar and looked at Darragh.

"I don't know," said Darragh. "But I did not quite realize that manufacturing, with all the protection it had enjoyed, was at such a low ebb."

"It is at a very low ebb," returned Alston. "We have only a home market. Our wages are already so high that, with the cost of other things, we cannot compete abroad with England. As I understand it," he continued, turning to Mr. Phillips, "we can export no cloth profitably?"

"Not a yard," responded Mr. Phillips, briefly.

"Is not the home market," asked Darragh,

after a pause, in which he again waited for further remark from the president, but was again disappointed, "is not the home market enough for you with no competition?"

"No," said Alston, "it is, not. For the truth, as I begin to see it, is, that manufacturing is being overdone here, and very much so too. It was very profitable once, and so increased out of all reason. The war gave it a false and pernicious impetus. And it seems difficult for it to get down to its right proportions. But it must get there. Meanwhile we are struggling along, trying to pay a little interest on our costly plants, and here is the operative bouncing around without the slightest idea of the economic condition of things, and clamoring for more pay."

"Well, Mr. Alston," said Darragh, "sometimes, you have admitted that they

ought to have it and have voted to give it them."

"Yes," said Alston. "But that is not what I speak of. If such cases were all, and if a *fair* increase were all they asked, I should have little to say on that head. But you have an organization kept alive by a few interested agitators, whose cry is that you are to go on and on, getting more pay and working less hours, *ad infinitum*. Such concessions as are obtained are only treated as instalments of the grand plan of increase and change, by these men, many of whom are in receipt of good salaries, and find agitation, and the keeping alive of the organization with all its fallacious hopes, personally profitable." Observing that Darragh colored a little, Alston added quickly: "I do not class you among these men, Mr. Darragh. I am informed that you have lost far more than you have gained by your

advocacy of this cause; and I certainly believe you to have been entirely honest when you did so."

The slight look of displeasure on Darragh's face gave place to one of deep dejection as he replied: "You only do me justice there, Mr. Alston. But I do not so much care for this. I would gladly be misunderstood myself, if I could believe, as formerly, that my friends were on the right track with this organization. But I am now thoroughly convinced that it is all a mistake, and a very mischievous one too. I have given up my membership in the order."

"I am glad of that," returned Alston, warmly. "Allow me to shake hands with you," he added, laughing, and suiting the action to the word, "as being a man and a brother once more. While you were shut in by the walls of that concern, I was

always puzzled to know whether you were above or below me. Certainly we were not equals. Now we are so in every sense, and I rejoice in it, for I have liked you well, my friend."

Alston spoke these words with a kind emphasis, that went to Darragh's heart.

"Mr. Alston," he said, slowly and with feeling, "the last few weeks have demonstrated to me that I have been immensely misled in my former estimate of some men. I looked upon all men of wealth and social position as utterly indifferent to the fate of those who did not possess these advantages; as ready to grind the faces of the poor, and careless of their wants and discomforts. I now know that true and large-hearted men are to be found everywhere: that we are all united in the great brotherhood of the race, and that it is wrong as well as useless to array a part of

the people against the other, merely because of accidental differences of material possessions with their incidental advantages."

"By Jove, you are right," said Alston. "We are all run in the same mould; and in this country, certainly, it is rather ridiculous for people to call themselves better than others, or hold themselves aloof on account of a little money. What do you say, Mr. Phillips?" he asked of that gentleman, who, apparently oblivious of the conversation, was curled in his easy-chair, and, with eyes closed, smoked meditatively.

"Great rot," — murmured Mr. Phillips calmly, without opening his eyes, or taking his cigar from his mouth. "My father," he added, with apparent relish, "peddled peanuts on a corner. I got to importing them myself."

He relapsed into silence as the others laughed.

"What I'm getting at, Mr. Darragh, is this," continued Alston, presently; "these men can get no such wages as they want; in the future they are going to get less. It's inevitable, in spite of the silly talk of the paid prophets of the 'Associates of Toil.' More than that, they are going to lose employment altogether, in many cases. Now, the truth is, there are too many wage-earners in this country, and they must begin to drop it. They must leave the employment before it leaves them."

"What," asked Darragh, "are they to do, and where are they to go?"

"Well," replied Alston, "they are to pick up the rake and take hold of the plough-handle; that's what they are to do; the broad lands of this country furnish the place for them to go to. Let them, in a word, turn farmers. We have too much constructive and too little productive work

in this country. We want less cloth and more corn; fewer railroads, and more farm produce to carry over them. — There would be better dividends all around, I think, if this were so. We have been wrong end foremost a good deal of the time, in our hurry to get ahead."

"Some men tell us," said Darragh, as Alston paused, "that there is no land left for the poor man here, that it has been all taken by land-grabbing railroad companies, and others."

"They be damned!" interrupted Alston. "Excuse me, but whenever a man wants to introduce some socialistic or agrarian ideas into a free country, he must needs begin by being an alarmist."

"Then," said Darragh, "you believe there is land enough left for us yet?"

"Why, just see here!" exclaimed Alston; "I venture to say that there is uncleared

land enough in New England to accommodate half of the workmen now in our mills and shops, not to speak of hundreds and thousands of cleared farms that may be bought or rented for a song. As to the West, there has been some land-grabbing, no doubt, but it does not lie in the mouth of any men, for a long time yet, to say they can find no land to till in this country, if they want it."

"But these men do not know how to farm," said Darragh; "who shall teach them?"

"Well," said Alston, "the science of agriculture seemed to come very easily to the early races of men, and I do not know that we are more particularly stupid than they. It needs hard work to get a living out of a farm, just as it does out of a loom or spinning-jenny. But the independence of the one life is far ahead of the other. A

farming community is the happiest in the world. I think old Tom Jefferson's early views on that subject were sounder than those of his dotage. Now, Mr. Darragh cannot a good many of these people be induced to change their occupation? That's my idea."

"I'm inclined to think," said Darragh, "that if you could find land for them, it would be difficult to persuade them to go."

"Not surprised at that," interrupted Mr. Phillips, in his moderate tones; "never caught on to the romance of farming, myself."

"Well," continued Darragh, with a smile, "odd as it may seem, many of these people working in a hot mill or shop all day, and living in almost unendurable tenements, wouldn't see it, either. The real difficulty would lie in persuading them to the change, particularly on account

of their habit of gregariousness, as it were. They are accustomed to be in crowds, and they could not bear to be alone, even with a snug little farm and comparative independence. And, then, if any were inclined, they wouldn't know where to turn for land, or how to get it."

"Of course," said Alston, pondering, with many puffs of his cigar, "of course, the matter is only half thought out yet; but it has occurred to me that if some rich men would take hold of it and secure land, not necessarily all in the West, but here, there, and everywhere,— new lands, and old, cheap farms,— and arrange to let these people have them on such terms of sale or rental as they preferred, the first step would be taken. It does not look to me as absolutely impracticable. Does it to you, Mr. Phillips?"

"Rather good as a philanthrophic

scheme," responded Mr. Phillips; "but should hardly recommend it as a safe investment of capital."

"No," said Alston, "not in the way of heavy pecuniary return. But you could get most of the money back. What was lost would, in quite a different sense, still be a good investment. I am willing to subscribe largely. And," he added, with a laugh, "I believe I could make you come down pretty heavily too."

"Don't know," said Mr. Phillips, leaning forward, and brushing some cigar ashes from the lapel of his dress-coat: "have made an ass of myself before now; may again."

Darragh began to be much interested. He had been so much in the habit of regarding the laboring man as a fixture, and only to be aided in the place where he found himself, that he was startled by the idea of changing his status altogether,—

putting him where the question of hours and income would be largely determined by himself. In a dim way, he had heretofore realized the fact that there were agriculturalists; but they had been classed in his mind with the capitalists of the world. He now began to see that there might be room for many wage-earners in this better state of life, if they had the energy and pluck to undertake it.

"It would," he said to Alston, "be a noble enterprise to deplete the ranks of the wage-earners, and make them independent, self-supporting producers. But it would be a stupendous one."

"Not so much trouble about it, either," returned Alston; "the thing has often been done before. All the colonization of new countries has been simply this, after all, under somewhat different conditions. And it is only the other day that I saw that some

people in Canada were about purchasing a tract of 35,000 acres, to settle some of their people, who had become dissatisfied with their lot as mill operatives in the United States. A great deal could be selected by agents, for preemption, with us."

"How are we to start the people?" asked Darragh, "after you begin to have land for them?"

"Well," said Alston, "such men as you would have to preach it up to them. They would take no stock in what I said, thanks to the class distinctions and animosities created by your labor organizations."

"I think," interrupted Darragh, "that you are not quite just to the 'Associates of Toil' there. It has never been their intention to do that. The equality of all men is one of their leading tenets of faith."

"I don't care what they teach," responded Alston; "the practical effect of the organi-

zation is diametrically opposed to such doctrine. They can hold their men together in no other way. But I like your candor in defending them under the circumstances."

Darragh put this aside by a little motion of the hand, as he rose.

"Perhaps," he said, "it would be fairer to say that they find men unequal, and profess to be able to restore the equality."

"Yes," said Alston. "But there they make a great blunder, it appears to me. In telling men that they form an inferior class, in a country like this, you degrade them. You impart a sense of injury where none has been inflicted. Until lately, a journeyman carpenter has felt himself to be the peer of the millionnaire; and so he was, in every essential. Worth has been the standard of manhood, and money only an incidental. Your organizations are changing all this. They falsely assume an inequality

as existing, that they may have an additional text from which to preach discontent, and kick up a row generally, all along the line. They create an evil sentiment, that they have no power to allay. — But you are not going," he added, as Darragh remained standing.

"Yes," he answered; "I must catch my train."

"Are you going clean away?" asked Alston. "I want to see you again. If I had the aid of a few men like you, it does seem as if the work I speak of might be really started. I am willing to put time and money into it, and get others to do so too — Mr. Phillips, here, for example, as before observed."

Mr. Phillips deigned no further notice of this than a slight grunt across the end of his cigar.

"I shall return to this vicinity in a few

days," said Darragh. "Meanwhile, I will talk over what you suggest, with others of our people, who are wiser than I. If you can do anything towards it, perhaps we can take hold with you. I confess I like the idea, if it be feasible. If the wage-earners can be thinned out, it ought to be better for those who go and those that remain."

"Well, good-luck to you!" said Alston, as Darragh took his leave of them, Mr. Phillips rising and shaking him silently but very heartily by the hand.

He had been much impressed by Darragh's manners and good-sense, and, after he had gone, remarked to Alston that he seemed a very excellent type of the working-man.

"Yes," said Alston. "I have rarely met a man I liked more."

"You're rather cutting us out of our labor by your little scheme," further remarked

the president, walking to and fro, with his hands in his pockets.

"I know it," replied Alston. "But there is no question that wage-earners are now too numerous for their own good. And, reasoning inductively to that cause, we must be willing to seek further for a remedy That is what the economists teach us."

"They," said the president, yawning, "only give us a set of definitions, after all."

"Well, definitions are a great help," said Alston. "They give us logical methods, and help us to the truth in that way."

Mr. Phillips looked at his watch. Suddenly he asked, "What's become of all the farmers' sons? why don't they do the farming?"

"Oh!" answered Alston, "they have been leaving the farms for fifty years past. Flocking, some to the West, but more to our own centres of population. A few

have bettered themselves, but the greater number have become wage-earners — they and their children. And the farms are running out and being abandoned."

Mr. Phillips pitched the end of his cigar into the open grate, and stood looking down at his boots for a moment with a thoughtful air.

"You think," he finally said, "that it's time for the tide to turn? — Well, on the whole, I'm not half sure that you're wrong."